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INTERVIEW

DANIEL BARENBOIM

Classical music's great ambassador on
bringing Wagner's Ring to the Proms



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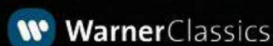
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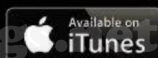
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Sounds of America

Gramophone's guide to the classical scene in the US and Canada



Reviews Cello discs from Cedille and Navona; great American string quartets » **The Scene** Live highlights – page VII

Auerbach

'Celloquy'

24 Preludes for Cello and Piano.
Cello Sonata. Postlude

Ani Aznavoorian *vc* Lera Auerbach *pf*
Cedille © CDR90000 137 (75' • DDD)



Auerbach as composer and pianist for Chicago cellist

The potent voice of composer Lera Auerbach is in full force on 'Celloquy', featuring cellist Ani Aznavoorian and Auerbach as pianist. In three works, the Russian-born composer employs diverse styles with a distinctive brand of succinct and penetrating expressivity.

Auerbach pays homage to past masters in the opening 24 Preludes, which rivets attention through a varied juxtaposition of poetic musings and technical colorations. The cello plays on the bridge, executes mysterious and ironic slides, and enters into dramatic soundscapes with the equally impetuous piano. A mocking parody of Mozart's overture to *The Magic Flute* shows up at one point, as do veiled or overt references to Bach, Bartók, Offenbach and pop musicians. It's a work of gregarious splendour, played to the fierce hilt by Aznavoorian and Auerbach, who also bring chilling intensity at the disc's end to the Postlude, which transforms the Prelude No 12 from the opening cycle through a panoply of disembodied sonorities.

Standing proudly between those works is the Cello Sonata, whose four movements reveal Auerbach's compositional acumen in more extended forms. As in the preludes, the composer builds pithy statements from seemingly simple materials. Extended techniques, including microtones, are used that come across as essential components in the music's emotional trajectory.

In everything, Aznavoorian combines lustrous lyricism with a dramatic panache that illuminates the extremes in Auerbach's music. The composer makes trenchant contributions anchoring her creations at the keyboard.

Donald Rosenberg

Lee

'Six Concertos'

Flauta Carioca^a. ...bisbigliando...^b. Violin Concerto^c.

GRAMOPHONE *talks to...*

Ovidiu Marinescu

The cellist on making the world-premiere recordings of eight cello pieces for his CD 'Moto perpetuo'

How did you choose what to record?

I approached the label with the concept of recording new music for cello, or for cello in partnership with other instruments. In conjunction with the recording was to be a set of live performances – the highlight will be a Carnegie Hall concert on October 15. So we put a call out for composers, and we received various submissions. We chose music that we liked, and that we believed was good. This presented an initial challenge though – how were we going to present a unified disc of music that is so varied? But I think the average listener today is very divergent, and so this disc has a little bit for everybody. It introduces sweet and sour, hot and cold, in such an organic way that listeners might be introduced to new music and find they like it.

All the composers are American, bar one...

Andrew March is from the UK and he wrote Three Pieces for solo cello particularly for me. My Bach Cello Suites recording inspired him to write music for cello with me in mind and



he sent a movement to the label. I was so moved that when this project came about we invited Andrew to submit his works as well, and he wrote two other pieces to form this set of three wonderful movements.

What does this CD say about the cello?

The cello is a maverick. It can demonstrate beauty of sound and virtuosity but also works in chamber music. This was never intended to be a show-off 'here is me' type of project. Maybe that's one of its strengths – that it takes the listener on a journey of different colours.

Do you have a favourite work?

I want to go to Arthur Gottschalk's Sonata for cello and piano, *In memoriam*. I sensed from the beginning that each movement has a powerful message. I had to ask myself, what did Art feel when he wrote this? It's what's beyond the musical text, what's between the notes, that brings the piece to life.

Piano Concerto, 'Mozartiana'^d. Persephone and the Four Seasons^e. Eurydice^f

^aSarah Brady *fl* ^gJennifer Slowik *ob*

^hIrina Muresanu *vn* ⁱRafael Popper-Keizer *vc*

^dRobert Levin *pf* ^bIna Zdorovetchi *hp*

Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose

BMOP/sound © 2 1025 (135' • DDD)



Boston's BMOP champions local composer's concertos

BMOP celebrates the 67th birthday of Thomas Oboe Lee, a composer of great renown in Boston and Cambridge, with six concertos written between 1995 and 2010.

These are *concertante* works in a 21st-century take on the late-18th-century vein, with an absorbing fluency of narrative expression and a profusion of pleasing melody – with lots of great solo parts for the instruments in the orchestra, too. Each of the concertos has a story, and each was written for friends.

The star is the Violin Concerto, written for Bucharest-born Irina Muresanu. Lee writes that he 'researched Brahms, Sibelius, Mozart, Prokofiev' and it shows – until he starts getting it right by getting it wrong at the most outlandish places, and the pyrotechnics and attitude that Muresanu must employ to maintain control are breathtaking. *Mozartiana*

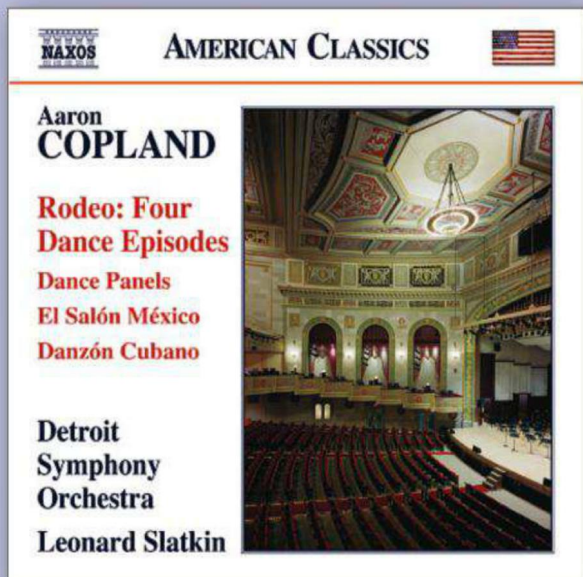
GEORGE GERSHWIN

Rhapsody in Blue • Strike Up the Band • Promenade • Catfish Row

Joann Falletta leads the incomparable Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in a survey of George Gershwin works that fired up the New York music scene with Gershwin's take on jazz. Acclaimed as a "bold, gutsy performance with plenty of pizzazz" and with "impressive brilliance and depth."

"One of the finest conductors of her generation."

– *The New York Times*



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JOHAN DE MEIJ

The Symphonies: Lord of the Rings • The Big Apple • Planet Earth

Award-winning conductor and composer Johan de Meij's First Symphony 'The Lord of the Rings' is a spectacular evocation of Tolkien's classic tale. The Second Symphony is an ode to New York City, while the cinematic effects of the Third Symphony form an epic paean to the earth in all its beauty.

"The Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble has to be rated among the very top wind bands in the US."

– *Fanfare*



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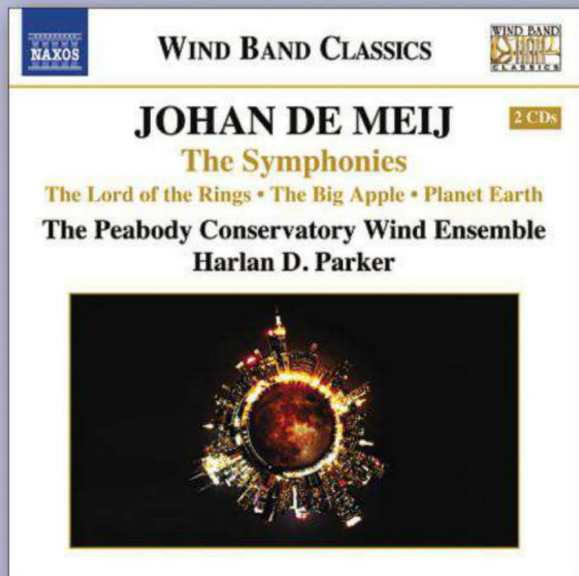
AARON COPLAND

Rodeo • Dance Panels • El Salón México • Danzón Cubano

While some of Copland's works have become hugely successful, such as his celebration of the American West, Rodeo, and his portraits of popular Mexican melodies, El Salón Mexico, some of his other works are underrepresented. Discover new worlds in a glittering musical competition evoked in the rhythmically complex Danzón Cubano, and the abstract dance movements of Dance Panels.

"With Slatkin you end up feeling complete satisfaction..."

– *BBC Music Magazine*



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The New York-based Horszowski Trio give voice to Dan Visconti's exploration of contrasts, *Lonesome Roads*

is also an absorbing exploration of what we know and what we don't, in this case about Mozart. Rising well above its premise of kidnapping Mozart fragments, it even provides time at the end for Cambridge neighbour and dedicatee Robert Levin to engage in a cadenza. *Flauta Carioca* is a semi-classical flute concerto inspired by the composer's Brazilian roots; *Eurydice* is a sumptuous 30-minute cello oration inspired by Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*. The effect is cumulative. These are substantial concertos; they fill out well the two discs.

Lee is well served by a series of outstanding performances headlined by stellar soloists who sound as if they really care. Martin Brody's essay, carelessly imagining bossa nova and *Tonnetz* 'dancing together', hits just the right academic note.

Laurence Vittes

Visconti

Black Bend. Lawless Airs. Ramble and Groove. Hard-Knock Stomp. Drift of Rainbows. Fractured Jams. Remembrances. Low Country Haze. Lonesome Roads^a Scharoun Ensemble; ^aHorszowski Trio Bridge © BRIDGE9386 (67' • DDD)



Pictures of America from the Verge Ensemble's director

Dan Visconti's music is much like the weather in the Midwest: if you don't like it, just stick around; it'll change in a few minutes. Not just from piece to piece, mind you – though it's hard enough to reconcile the firm momentum of *Hard-Knock Stomp* (2000), the earliest piece in this collection, with the comparably forced ramble of *Ramble and Groove* (2009), which never quite finds the groove promised. Even within a single work such as *Black Bend* (2003), the contrasts between a spacious landscape and bluesy vernacular – or in *Lawless Airs* (2008), between Coplandesque lyricism and spare, pointillistic harmonics – often seem like two unrelated pieces strangely grafted together.

It would be tempting to label Visconti a miniaturist, since pieces like *Remembrances* (2008) or *Drift of Rainbows* (2009) are particularly efficient in distilling their emotional states. Even *Fractured Jams* (2006), his most self-conscious effort to span the full range of colloquial Americana in less than 15 minutes, never lets any of its four movements outstay its welcome. Pieces such as

Low Country Haze (2009) and *Lonesome Roads* (2012), though, reveal entirely different levels of ambition. The former makes its mark in sonic terms, its rather conventional orchestration expanding to incorporate a gamelan of tuned wine glasses. The latter focuses on duration, inclusively embracing its wide range of musical contrasts rather than merely wielding them as stark juxtapositions. As 'Lonesome Roads', the collection's title-piece suggests, Visconti's music evokes the physical landscape of America, a range of contrasts in an integrated whole. **Ken Smith**

'American Anthem'

Barber String Quartet, Op 11. Serenade, Op 1. Dover Beach, Op 3^a Hanson String Quartet, Op 23. Concerto da camera, Op 7^b R Thompson Alleluia (arr Ying Quartet)

Ying Quartet with ^aRandall Scarlata bar

^bAdam Neiman pf

Sono Luminus © ② (CD + DSL92166 (74' • DDD • DTS-HD MA 5.1 24-bit/192kHz)



Classics and newbies from Eastman-resident quartet

The Ying Quartet, quartet-in-residence at the

JULY 5 – AUGUST 18, 2013

BARD SUMMERSCAPE

"Bard SummerScape and Bard Music Festival always unearth piles of buried treasures." — *The New Yorker*

Bard SummerScape 2013 presents seven inspired weeks of opera, music, theater, dance, film, and cabaret. The hub of these offerings is the 24th annual Bard Music Festival, this year examining the life, work, and cultural milieu of the 20th-century composer Igor Stravinsky. SummerScape takes place in the extraordinary Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts and other venues on Bard College's stunning Mid-Hudson Valley campus.

Opera July 26 – August 4

U.S. Stage Premiere

ORESTEIA

Music by Sergey Taneyev

American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leon Botstein
Directed by Thaddeus Strassberger

Russian composer Sergey Taneyev's extraordinary but rarely staged opera conveys the searing drama of Aeschylus' powerful trilogy about the cursed House of Atreus.

Dance/Theater July 6–7

A RITE

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and SITI Company

A new work celebrating the centennial of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Theater July 11–21

World Premiere Adaptation

THE MASTER AND MARGARITA

Directed by János Szász

Adapted by János Szász and Gideon Lester after the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov

At once a pungent political satire, a magical fantasy, and an unforgettable love story.

Bard Music Festival

Twenty-fourth Season

STRAVINSKY AND HIS WORLD

Two weekends of concerts, panels, and other events bring the musical world of Russian composer Igor Stravinsky vividly to life.

WEEKEND ONE August 9–11

Becoming Stravinsky: From St. Petersburg to Paris will trace Stravinsky's path from his early Russian years to his first great successes in Paris writing for Sergei Diaghilev's legendary Ballets Russes, most notably the scandalous premiere of *The Rite of Spring*.

WEEKEND TWO August 16–18

Stravinsky Reinvented: From Paris to Los Angeles will explore Stravinsky's creative output during the interwar years and the music he composed in the United States, where he settled in 1939.

Film Festival July 12 – August 3

STRAVINSKY'S LEGACY AND RUSSIAN ÉMIGRÉ CINEMA

Spiegeltent July 5 – August 18

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ALAN HOVHANESS —

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Crystal has the largest collection of recordings of Hovhaness works conducted or supervised by the composer, most with major British orchestras. A small sample (see web for many more):

CD810: And God Created Great Whales, Anahid, Elibris, Alleluia & Fugue, Concerto #8 for Orchestra. Philharmonia Orch. **CD802:** St. Vartan Symphony, "Artik" Horn Concerto. National Phil. of London & Israel Philharmonic. **CD803:** Majnun Symphony. National Phil. of London. **CD804:** Etchmiadzin Symphony, Fra Angelico, and more.



Zelenka Six Chamber Sonatas

A friend of J.S. Bach and one of the most respected composers of the period, Zelenka wrote these six Quatre Sonatas for two oboes (one with oboe and violin), bassoon, and continuo

(harpsichord and bass). Performed here by principal players from the Dallas & Houston Symphonies & St. Paul Chamber Orchestra., **CD821 (vol. 1): Sonatas 1-3; CD822 (vol. 2): Sonatas 4-6**



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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Eastman School of Music since 1997, stand astride an immense stretch of essential American literature. The bold, eloquent performances, recorded in immaculately audiophile sound, make a claim for the lost American generation of Hanson and Barber, and three works here deserve special mention.

Hanson's early *Concerto da camera*, Op 7, reconstructed in its piano quintet form, is derivative of some unspeakably gorgeous Romantic, storm-tossed fantasy. It has an infectious glee in laying notes on paper that the composer often lost in the professionalism of his maturity. This was a collaborative effort on all counts, with Adam Neiman providing elegant pianism redolent of an MGM 1940s biopic, and the Sibley Music Library at Eastman providing access to handwritten sketches and the manuscript score.

A second indispensable item on this CD is the world premiere recording of the original finale to Barber's String Quartet, Op 11, five minutes of charming student exercise, intoxicated musically with romance and the Continent, composed during a European idyll. It was popular at the time with the quartets that played it, and with audiences too, but Barber replaced it in 1943 with something abrupt and makeshift, an angry recap of the first movement. The original stands well on its own.

The Ying Quartet's arrangement of Randall Thompson's choral *Alleluia*, which opened the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood in 1940, captures the rapt beauty of the music's consolation and faith, complete with a quiet ending that has more emotional impact than most *fortissimos*. **Laurence Vittes**

'Moto perpetuo'

'Moving Works for Cello'

Ascioti Adirondack Meditation^a **Bartholomew** Beneath the Apple Tree^b **Beeler** Dance Suite^c.

One Good Turn Deserves Another. Variations on Re-Do-Mi **A Gottschalk** Cello Sonata,

'In memoriam'^a **March** Three Pieces

Sherrill Divertimento for Strings^d

Ovidiu Marinescu vc with ^b**Kim Troler** fl ^{cd}**Sylvia Davis**

Ahrmjan, ^{ad}**Dana Weiderhold** vns ^d**Scott Wagner** va

^d**Charles J Muench** db ^a**Janet Ahlquist** pf

Navona © NV5901 (69' • DDD)



Marinescu curates and plays momentum-themed cello disc

Not everything on cellist Ovidiu Marinescu's new disc flashes by as the first part of the title suggests. The subtitle reveals that the programme also includes moments of rumination and brooding personality, qualities that suit the dark, sagacious timbre of the cello, amid episodes of rustic charm and extrovert vitality. It's a highly eclectic mix of repertoire.



All American: the Ying Quartet and pianist Adam Neiman play music by Samuel Barber and Howard Hanson

Marinescu makes his bold and expressive way through works by six composers who generally write in styles with tonal roots, with a few excursions into piquant harmonic territory. The cello isn't always placed centre stage. In three of the eight pieces, Marinescu teams with colleagues in chamber-music conversations of winsome and impassioned appeal.

Three works by Alan Beeler reveal the composer's ability to devise miniatures that are as engaging as they are concise, especially his Dance Suite for violin and cello. Andrew March's Three Pieces for solo cello, whose 'Moto perpetuo' movement gives the disc its title, portrays the instrument as a moody and nimble philosopher.

The influence of folk music can be heard in three warm-hearted scores:

Greg Bartholomew's *Beneath the Apple Tree*

(for flute and cello), Bill Sherrill's

Divertimento for Strings and

Nicholas Anthony Ascioti's *Adirondack*

Meditation (for violin, cello and piano).

Marinescu has an opportunity to go temperamentally wild in Arthur Gottschalk's Cello Sonata, subtitled *In memoriam*. The three movements pay tribute to individuals – named in the digital liner notes – who are at once rapturous, argumentative and prickly. Hints of jazz pervade the final movement, which finds the piano stuck in a harmonic groove as the cello takes violent flight throughout its range.

Donald Rosenberg

'Zia'

Evangelista Spanish Garland **GL Frank**

Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout **L Harrison**

String Quartet Set **Kats-Chernin** Fast Blue Village 2

Vali Nayshâboorâk (*Calligraphy No 6*)

Del Sol Quartet

Sono Luminus © DSL92164 (74' • DDD)



Bay Area composers in San Fran quartet's sun project

Inspired by the Zia, a Native American people in New Mexico, the San Francisco-based Del Sol String Quartet have adopted the symbol of a sun radiating in four directions – a rather mixed message, it would seem, since it's influences from north, south, east and west that instead converge here.

This collection's guiding figure, in any case, is Lou Harrison, the mid-century prophet of multiculturalism whose *String Quartet Set* (1978-79) is both the oldest and longest piece on the disc. Next in terms of duration is fellow Bay Area composer Gabriela Lena Frank, whose *Leyendas: An Andean Walkabout* (2001) uses the string quartet medium to reimagine a range of Peruvian sounds from panpipes and guitars to plaintive funeral singing.

Other beams of music congregating here are equally well-travelled. José Evangelista's *Spanish Garland* (1993) routes its Iberian sources by way of Montreal; Reza Vali's *Nayshâboorâk* (*Calligraphy No 6*) (2005-06) is Persia via Pittsburgh. The Uzbek roots of Elena Kats-Chernin's *Fast Blue Village 2* (2007) find themselves blooming in Sydney.

Throughout the recording, the Del Sol's playing is lush and sonically balanced, with a rhythmic propulsion that remains quick off the mark. One could grumble that the programme is overly folk-like and ingratiating, though an Austrian ensemble playing Haydn properly would likely fall under the same category.

In that way, the Del Sol have bypassed the rather too obvious model of Bartók and gone straight to the roots of the form. Haydn might not recognise all the sources here but he'd know where they came from. **Ken Smith**

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THE SCENE

Theodore Morrison's much-anticipated opera dealing with Oscar Wilde's trial and conviction finally comes to Santa Fe and there's a wealth of new music to be heard at both Cabrillo and Tanglewood

ATHERTON

Music@Menlo

From Bach (July 18 - August 10)

Now entering its second decade, the San Francisco Bay Area's top chamber music festival celebrates Bach with eight thrilling concert programmes exploring his profound influence through the centuries. Each reveals how his music shaped harmony, even permeating the music of the string quartet and the piano trio. Works by Bartók, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Strauss and Shostakovich (to name but a few) are juxtaposed with a range of Bach's masterworks. A popular series of artist-curated concerts allow guest musicians to continue this immersion from a personal perspective, with violinists Soovin Kim and Jorja Fleezanis, cellists Colin Carr and Laurence Lesser, and percussionists Christopher Froh, Ayano Kataoka and Ian Rosenbaum.

musicatmenlo.org

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring (July 23)

Grimaud Plays Brahms (August 6 & 8)

Stravinsky's masterwork has an outing at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Phil - a venue and orchestra the composer knew well. Guest conductor Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos leads the concert, which also features Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto played by Augustin Hadelich. In early August, rising-star maestro James Gaffigan presents Strauss's *Don Juan* and Brahms's First Piano Concerto with French pianist Hélène Grimaud.

hollywoodbowl.com

NEW YORK

Lincoln Center

Mostly Mozart Festival (July 27 - August 24)

Led by Louis Langrée, this ever-popular festival explores the musical bonds between Mozart and Beethoven. The opening night intersperses beloved Mozart arias (sung by mezzo Alice Coote) with Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture. Fourth Piano Concerto (with Jean-Efflam Bavouzet) and Seventh Symphony. Festival highlights include the Emerson Quartet with Beethoven's *Razumovsky* Quartets; pianists Emmanuel Ax and Paul Lewis performing concertos by Beethoven and Mozart respectively; and artists-in-residence the

EVENT OF THE MONTH



Countertenor David Daniels rehearsing with Jeanne-Minette Cilliers

SANTA FE

Santa Fe Opera

Morrison: Oscar (premiere)

(July 27 & 31; August 9, 12 & 17)

Oscar Wilde reportedly had a 'mezzo voice', so it's only fitting that Theodore Morrison's new opera based on the writer's life (the story was devised with Wilde scholar John Cox) is written for a counter-tenor. For David Daniels, who's best known in Baroque opera circles, this is his first starring role in a contemporary work composed especially for his voice. The cast also includes Dwayne Croft, Heidi Stober and William Burden. Evan Rogister conducts. santafeopera.org

International Contemporary Ensemble mixing innovative new works with pieces by Beethoven. mostlymozart.org

SANTA CRUZ

Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

Bermel, Chapela, Dean, Friar, Glass, Puts, Rouse, Walker et al (August 2-11)

The festival lives up to its label of 'new-music mecca' this year with two world-premiere commissions (by Pulitzer Prize-winning Kevin Puts and Los Angeles native Sean Friar), two US premieres (by Brett Dean and Philip Glass) and two West Coast premieres (by Christopher Rouse and George Walker). Marin Alsop leads the Festival Orchestra into thrilling new sonic territory, from composer Derek Bermel's *Dust Dances* (which brings West African rhythms into the symphonic context) to Enrico Chapela's *Magnetar* - a concerto for electric cello and orchestra featuring Johannes Moser. Another highlight is the return of fearless new-music crusaders the Kronos Quartet.

cabrillomusic.org

LENOX

Tanglewood

Festival of Contemporary Music (August 8-12)

Under the direction of French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard, the festival showcases

two composers not well known on American shores: Germany's Helmut Lachenmann and Italy's Marco Stroppa. More familiar fare includes works by Reich, Carter and Ligeti. One highlight is the US premiere of George Benjamin's critically acclaimed opera *Written on Skin* in a concert presentation. bso.org

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON

Bard Music Festival

Stravinsky and His World (August 9-11, 16-18)

The heart of this festival comprises 11 programmes of music by Stravinsky and his contemporaries, but there are also panel discussions and lectures, thanks to the intellectual endeavours of Leon Botstein and his American Symphony Orchestra. The first weekend - 'Becoming Stravinsky: From St Petersburg to Paris' - covers Stravinsky's output from pre-revolutionary Russia to 1920s Paris, during which time he changed music for ever with *The Rite of Spring*. The second weekend - 'Stravinsky Reinvented: From Paris to Los Angeles' - examines the composer's evolving musical language and his émigré life in California. fishercenter.bard.edu

Previews by Damian Fowler

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GRAMOPHONE is published by Haymarket Consumer, Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE, United Kingdom. gramophone.co.uk
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Volume 91 Number 1098

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North American edition: *Gramophone* ISSN number 74501X, is published 13 times a year by Haymarket Media Group, Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington TW11 9BE, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is \$89. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. Subscription records are maintained at Haymarket Media Group, Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington TW11 9BE. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'Tippett, for me, is one of the greatest composers of all – how nice that his star is once again in the ascendant,' says **OLIVER SODEN**, who has written about the special focus on Tippett's music at this year's Proms. 'It's such a pleasure to explore this subject for *Gramophone* – a Tippett revival is long overdue.'



For this issue's Specialist's Guide, **ADRIAN EDWARDS** seeks out the most intriguing recordings of concert suites written since Tchaikovsky revived the genre. As he writes, 'The term "suite" covers many preambulations but in its purest sense it has attracted a wide range of composers and, notably, many from the UK.'



For her feature on the *Choirbook for the Queen* project, **CAROLINE GILL** attended the BBC Singers' recording sessions: 'Five hundred years ago, the record for the last proper choirbook was made by scribes; this time it was made by 21st-century electronics – proof of how little the importance of music has changed over time.'

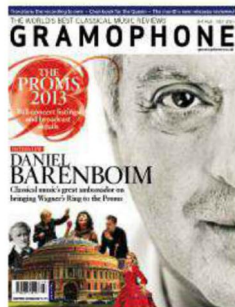


FOR THE LIST OF GRAMOPHONE REVIEWERS
TURN TO PAGE 49 ►

GRAMOPHONE

Founded in 1923 by Sir Compton Mackenzie and Christopher Stone as 'an organ of candid opinion for the numerous possessors of gramophones'

The Proms – a music festival for the world



'The world's greatest music festival.' If Daniel Barenboim can use that phrase about the Proms, then – despite being London-based and so susceptible to charges of bias – so can we. In scope and scale of repertoire and range of artists, it is unrivalled. When it comes to accessibility, the opportunity to turn up on the day and, for a modest sum, stand feet away from the world's greatest performers is quite a selling point. As is the opportunity to tune in or log on to BBC Radio 3, BBC Two or BBC Four, or the Proms website to enjoy the concerts. Not that the Proms needs a selling point: 114,000 tickets were bought in the first 12 hours of sale.

All of which makes it easy to be complacent. To attend the Royal Albert Hall during the Proms – or indeed many other city-centre

'Knowledge about, and enthusiasm for, classical music in the wider world can be, frankly, limited at best. We need our champions – the Proms is one'

concert halls during the main concert season – might render talk of classical music being a marginal activity as somewhat absurd. But, in truth, it is in danger of becoming so. Knowledge about, and enthusiasm for, classical music in the wider world can be, frankly, limited at best. We need our champions. The Proms, with its knack for claiming swathes of general media real estate, is one. Daniel Barenboim is another. Without compromising his musical activities, he manages to root music-making in the wider cultural and social world, where it should belong, and where its greatest advocates of generations past would have found it. And, crucially, the wider world listens. This year Barenboim brings Wagner's *Ring* to the Proms; Geoffrey Norris talks to him about that, as well as about his ability to take classical music to new audiences.

Classical music always needs to embrace different ways of enthusing, inspiring and educating. The Proms does it, and so, too, does a Beethoven app from DG and Touch Press, a foretaste of the role tablet technology could play in classical music (see page 13). The way we listen, and what we listen to, continues to evolve. And as it does so, we'll continue to tell you about it – just as we have for 90 years now.



Martin

martin.cullingford@haymarket.com

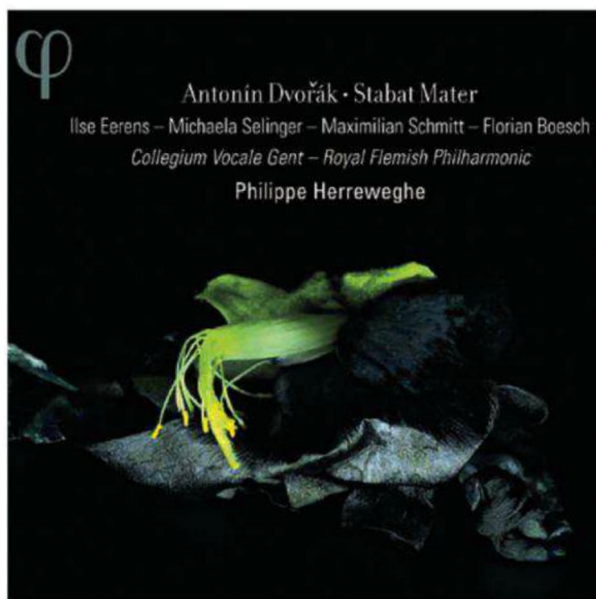
July 2013

WorldMags.net

GRAMOPHONE *Choice*



Informed by our unrivalled panel of critics,
we choose the month's must-hear recordings



Recording of the Month

'All of Herreweghe's performers clearly love this ravishing music, relishing every detail of this beautifully nuanced score'

DVOŘÁK

Stabat mater, Op 58 B71

Ilse Eerens *sop* **Michaela Selinger** *mez*

Maximilian Schmitt *ten* **Florian Boesch** *bass*

Collegium Vocale, Ghent; Royal Flemish Philharmonic /

Philippe Herreweghe

PHI LPH009

► [READ MALCOLM RILEY'S REVIEW ON PAGE 50](#)



BEETHOVEN

Triple Concerto;

Archduke Trio

Storioni Trio; **Netherlands**

Symphony Orchestra /

Jan Willem de Vriend

Challenge Classics CC72579

'The striking feature, first of all, is the power, incisiveness and sense of purpose that de Vriend inspires in the orchestra.'

► [REVIEW ON PAGE 52](#)



HOLMBOE

'Concertos'

Erik Heide *vn* **Lars Anders**

Tomter *va* **Norrköping**

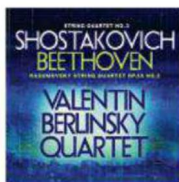
Symphony Orchestra /

Dima Slobodeniouk

Dacapo 6 220599

'That this is one of the finest viola concertos ever penned I have not the slightest doubt, and it is thrown off with dazzling virtuosity.'

► [REVIEW ON PAGE 57](#)



BEETHOVEN.

SHOSTAKOVICH

String Quartets

Valentin Berlinsky

Quartet

Avie AV2273

'The Berlinskys manage to make distinct the vastly contrasting characters of both composers without detracting from either.'

► [REVIEW ON PAGE 64](#)



BOWEN

Works for Violin and Piano

Chloë Hanslip *vn*

Danny Driver *pf*

Hyperion CDA67991/2

'I was particularly smitten with the 1917 diptych of *Serenade* and *Valse harmonique*, the latter a captivating morsel of exquisite grace and capricious charm.'

► [REVIEW ON PAGE 65](#)



SCHNITTKE

String Trio; Piano Quartet;

Piano Quintet

Molinari Quartet;

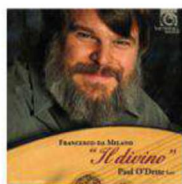
Marcin Swoboda *va*

Louise Bessette *pf*

ATMA Classique ACD2 2669

'That any group could play this music better than the Montreal-based Molinari Quartet is inconceivable.'

► [REVIEW ON PAGE 67](#)

**MILANO**

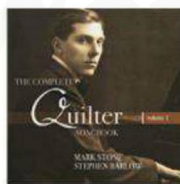
'Il Divino'

Paul O'Dette *lute*

Harmonia Mundi

HMU90 7557

'A truly ravishing programme in which Milano's masterly control of drama is fully brought out by O'Dette's highly expressive, *cantabile* and colouristic playing.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 73****QUILTER**

'The Complete Quilter Songbook, Vol 1'

Mark Stone *bar***Stephen Barlow** *pf*

Stone Records 5060192

'Mark Stone could not be more sensitive in his response to the words with his remarkably clear diction and Stephen Barlow is comparably understanding.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 82****'A TRIBUTE TO FAUSTINA BORDONI'**

Opera Arias

Vivica Genaux *mez***Cappella Gabetta /****Andrés Gabetta**

DHM 88691 94459-2

'Cappella Gabetta accompany with considerable warmth. I cannot remember enjoying Genaux's singing more than this.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 89****'I VIAGGI DI FAUSTINA'**

Opera Arias

Roberta Invernizzi *sop***I Turchini / Antonio Florio**

Glossa GCD922606

'Invernizzi's beautiful slow singing and the sensitive string band are breathtaking in the siciliano "Un guardo solo ancor" from Vinci's *Il trionfo di Camilla*.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 89****DVD/Blu-ray BRITTEN**

Peter Grimes

Soloists; Chorus and**Orchestra of La Scala,****Milan / Robin Ticciati**

Opus Arte

OA1103D; OABD7119D

'An outstanding *Grimes* and the clearest evocation of the scares and terrors that lie beneath the work.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 86****Reissue/Archive KALABIS**

Orchestral Works

Various soloists,**orchestras and conductors**

Supraphon Archiv

SU4109-2

'There are fine performances by all the soloists here, ably accompanied by the cream of Prague's orchestras.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 57****GRAMOPHONE** *Reviews*

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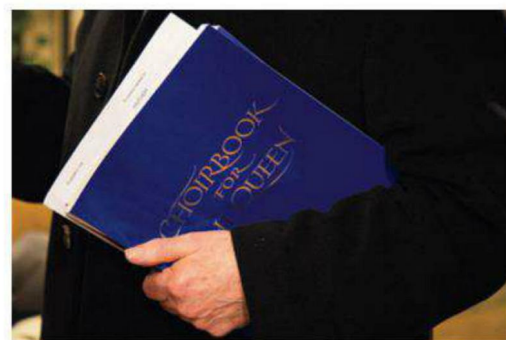
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16 Herculean challenge: recording Strauss



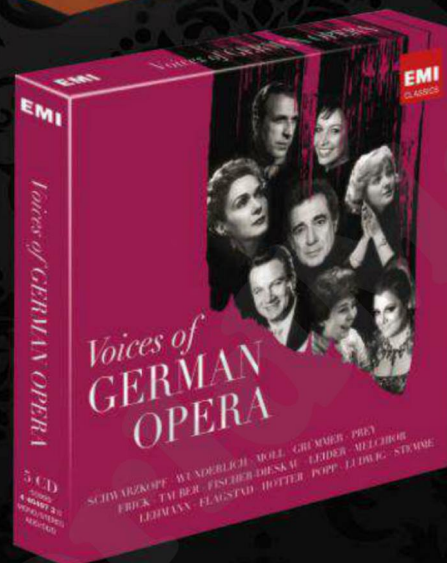
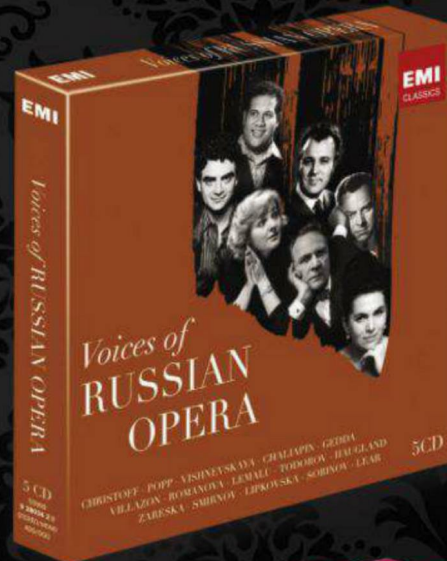
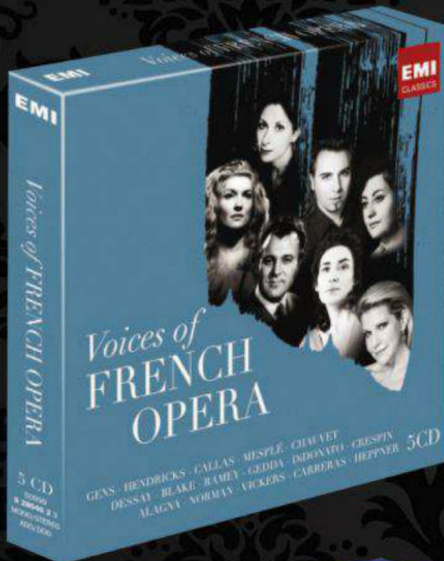
31 The Proms: (top) Daniel Barenboim; (right) Tippett with Sir Adrian Boult; (above) London's Royal Albert Hall



46 Creating a lasting legacy: Choirbook for the Queen

Voices of Opera

These individual box sets present a sampling of the many outstanding voices captured on record by EMI over the past Century in the field of French, Russian, Italian and German opera. They include material from the early catalogues of the Gramophone Company, British Columbia, Parlophone and Odeon. Different opera traditions have been clearly defined over the years under the guidance of the composers themselves, and the performance style has been handed down to the present day by the great singers heard in these collections.





Gianni Schicchi – Opera Holland Park 2012

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GRAMOPHONE *Online*

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PODCASTS

Gramophone's editor, Martin Cullingford, speaks to violinist Viktoria Mullova (pictured) about her new recording of Bach's Violin Concertos

NEWS, BLOGS AND FEATURES

Keep up to date with the latest classical music news and immerse yourself in online features. This month, Hannah Nepil reports from the sessions of American mezzo Lucy Schafer's 'Carpentersville'

THE GRAMOPHONE PLAYER

Hear tracks from the month's *Gramophone* Choice recordings – including the Recording of the Month – and the top recommendations from this month's Collection by Mike Ashman on Verdi's *Il trovatore*

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Follow us to hear about – and then discuss with our online community – the latest classical music news and anniversaries

'Practising is hard work. It's good when it goes well – but that's rare'

Viktoria Mullova



PHOTOGRAPHY: MAX PUCCIARELLO

FESTIVAL SUMMER



Andreas Schüller Conductor
Festival Retz (A)
Ensemble Festival Retz
Britten: **The Prodigal Son**
4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14 VII 2013



Thomas Blondelle Tenor
Munich Opera Festival
Bavarian State Orchestra Bertrand de Billy
Strauss: **Ariadne auf Naxos** Tanzmeister
4, 7, 10 VII 2013



Sonja Šarić Soprano

Idunnu Münch Mezzo-Soprano

Salzburg Festival
Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg Ivor Bolton
Mendelssohn: **A Midsummer Night's Dream**
3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 22 VIII 2013



Thomas Blondelle Tenor
BBC Proms
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra Donald Runnicles
Wagner: **Tannhäuser** Walther von der Vogelweide
4 VIII 2013



Sebastian Geyer Baritone
Edinburgh International Festival
Frankfurter Museumsorchester Constantinos Carydis
Purcell: **Dido and Aeneas** Aeneas
24, 25 VIII 2013



Thomas Blondelle Tenor
Lucerne Festival
Bamberger Symphoniker Jonathan Nott
Wagner: **Das Rheingold** Froh
30 VIII 2013



Joana Mallwitz Conductor
Macau International Music Festival
Latvijas Nacionālā Opera Orchestra
Wagner: **Das Rheingold**
5 X 2013



Bele Kumberger Soprano
1st Flower Maiden / II

Annika Sophie Ritlewski Soprano
1st Squire, 2nd Flower Maiden / I



Attilio Glaser Tenor
4th Squire

Beijing Music Festival
China Philharmonic Orchestra Peter Schneider
Wagner: **Parsifal**
29, 31 X 2013



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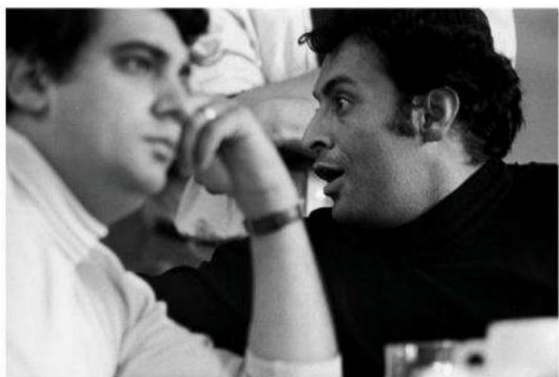
Photos: Barbara Auermueller, Johan Jacobs, Nicolas Kröger, Bella Lieberberg, Yasemin Stahl.



PRELUDES

On music, on musicians, on record

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Triumphant trovatore

Where
Walthamstow Town Hall,
London, 1969

The details
Zubin Mehta records
Verdi's *Il trovatore* with
Plácido Domingo and
Leontyne Price for RCA.
(Opposite page, left to
right) Sherrill Milnes,
Zubin Mehta, Leontyne
Price; (above) Mehta,
Price; (left) Plácido
Domingo, Mehta;
(below, left) Domingo,
Mehta, Price

As legendary collaborations go, it's one for the history books. When Leontyne Price in formidable voice took on the lead role of Leonora for RCA's recording of Verdi's *Il trovatore*, who better to partner her than American baritone Sherrill Milnes as Il Conte di Luna and Spanish tenor Plácido Domingo as Manrico? Back in 1969, Domingo and Milnes were hot young stars, making them the natural choice to headline the London recording for a 33-year-old Zubin Mehta. Also featured were the then New Philharmonia Orchestra (today's Philharmonia), who had become a self-governing body just five years earlier in 1964, and the Ambrosian Opera Chorus under the direction of co-founder John McCarthy. The producer was Richard Mohr – you can read an article he wrote for *Gramophone* in 1970 about recording the work at gramophone.co.uk/features – and the recording engineer was Anthony Salvatore. The resulting disc has been described by *Gramophone*'s Mike Ashman, who writes his Collection on *Il trovatore* this month (see page 96), as 'a straight, no-nonsense reading with all the thrills in place'. 'This', he adds, 'could still be the "library" *Trovatore*.'



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The Tudors is supported by a lead gift from **PETER MOORES FOUNDATION** Swansong Project

Boston Symphony Orchestra crowns Andris Nelsons its new music director

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the world's foremost orchestras but since March 2011, when James Levine stepped down amid health problems, the ensemble has been without a full-time music director. Now, following a two-year wait, the role has been filled by the Latvian conductor Andris Nelsons, who, at the age of 34, is the youngest BSO music director in more than 100 years and, like the LA Philharmonic's 32-year-old Gustavo Dudamel, has a reputation for energy and charisma.

Nelsons first conducted the orchestra in 2011 as an emergency substitute for Levine at Carnegie Hall and he has since appeared on both the Symphony Hall and Tanglewood podiums. On the other side of the Atlantic, Nelsons has also been busy since 2008 cementing a fine reputation as music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and has thus far given no indication that his contract there will come to an end.

'Each time I have worked with the BSO I have been inspired by how effectively it gets to the heart of the music, always leaving its audience with a great wealth of emotions,' said Nelsons.

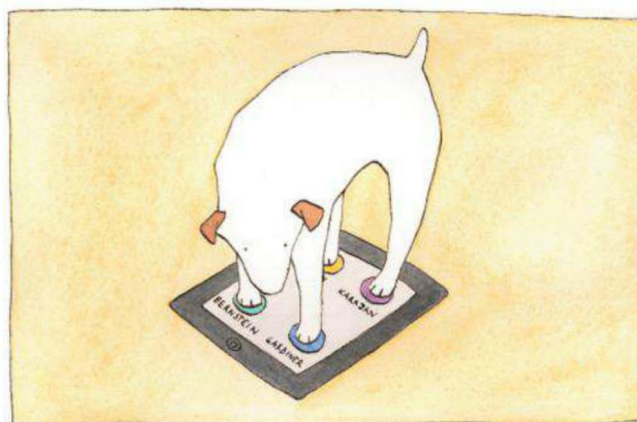
'As I consider my future with the Boston Symphony, I imagine us working closely together to bring the deepest passion and love that we all share for music to ever greater numbers of music fans.'

'At the age of 34, Latvian conductor Andris Nelsons is the BSO's youngest music director in more than 100 years'

Nelsons's initial five-year contract begins in the 2014-15 season. He will act as music director designate for the 2013-14 season, making his first appearance in that capacity in October. He returns to the BSO podium on March 6, 2014, to conduct a performance of Strauss's *Salome* and will make an appearance at Tanglewood on July 27, conducting Verdi's Requiem.

As technology marches ceaselessly forward, the ways to experience recorded music continue to change and develop. Most recent in a long line of innovations – and one which uses current trends genuinely to enhance the listening experience – is the new Beethoven Ninth Symphony app from Deutsche Grammophon and Touch Press.

In times past, comparing the recordings of Karajan and Bernstein might involve changing the CD and fast-forwarding through to find the relevant section. Not so now. The new iPad app contains four recordings of the Ninth – Ferenc Fricsay with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1958; Herbert von Karajan, again with the BPO, in 1962; Leonard Bernstein and the Vienna Philharmonic in 1979 (on film); and Sir John Eliot Gardiner with his Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique in 1992. Tantalisingly, at any given point the user can jump between the four versions, instantly comparing tempi, approach and – in the case of Gardiner's period-instrument ensemble – pitch. The app also enables the user to listen to the work alongside a scrolling manuscript of the Jonathan Del



Mar edition, or alternatively to follow the 1825 Royal Philharmonic Society manuscript. There are a number of other nifty features, too, including the 'BeatMap', a diagrammatic aerial view of the orchestra, with spots representing musicians that pulse as they play; detailed passage-by-passage notes written by David Owen Norris; and a series of filmed interviews with conductors and musicians.

Whether the app should be categorised as a recording, an educational project or a hybrid of the two, it is a fine example of how impressive the current technology can be in sensitive and knowledgeable hands.

May 22, 2013, marked 200 years since the birth of Richard Wagner, an event celebrated with the release of an abridged seven-hour version of *The Ring* from the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Always a polarising figure, Wagner's works and their modern interpretations continue to court controversy today. The Colón *Ring* was beset with backstage dramas, including the abrupt departure of the composer's great-granddaughter – stage director and Bayreuth Festival co-intendant Katharina Wagner. But such disputes were at least kept off the stage.

At Düsseldorf's Deutsche Oper am Rhein, however, director Burkhard C Kosminski's reimagining of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in a Nazi concentration camp proved unpalatable for audiences. Some found depictions of a gas chamber and execution so harrowing that they were forced to seek medical help. The company was unable to convince its director to cut the offending scenes and was therefore left with no option but to present the remaining dates as concerts.

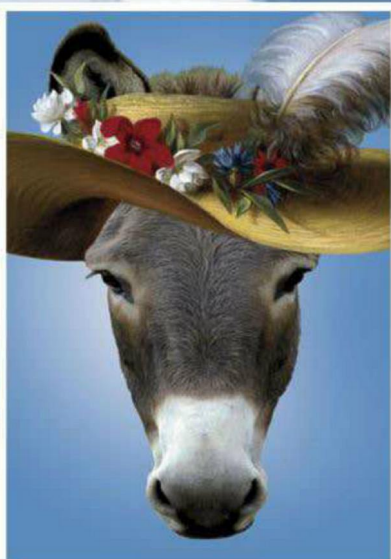
Finally, the Mariinsky Theatre officially opened the doors to Mariinsky II, its new state-of-the-art opera house in St Petersburg, on May 2. The company, led by artistic and general director Valery Gergiev, celebrated the opening with three days of special performances, featuring such guests as Plácido Domingo, Anna Netrebko and René Pape. The new opera house will connect to the historic stage of the Mariinsky Theatre by a planned pedestrian bridge and features seven storeys and three underground levels. **Charlotte Smith**
Geoffrey Norris reports on the opening events of Mariinsky II next issue



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DI PAGLIA DI FIRENZE**

Nino Rota

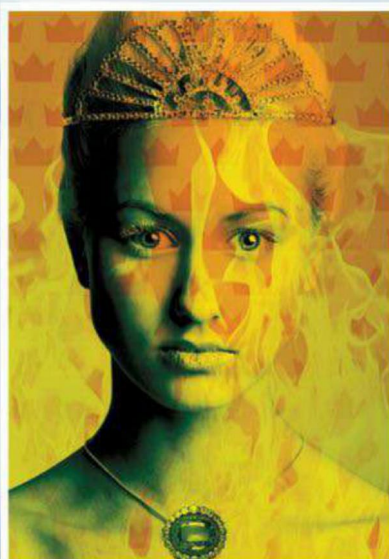
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CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

Christopher Fox

Philip Clark champions a British composer whose music is impossible to categorise

At the German Resistance Museum in Berlin, a familiar face stared back from the other side of a photo frame and the composer Christopher Fox decided to make a musical memory piece. Fox suspected he might find family ghosts in the German capital. His aunt Elisabeth von Thadden was executed by the Nazis in 1944 after she unwittingly revealed forbidden thoughts about the regime and her aspirations for Germany after the war to a Gestapo spy. But chancing upon her photograph so easily and quickly was a shock. 'Music is particularly suited to the depiction of the inner life, and I decided to make my aunt my subject,' Fox has written.

Three years in the making and dedicated to Elisabeth, Fox's chamber opera *Widerstehen* was premiered in Freiburg at the end of last year. But there was no live broadcast on BBC Radio 3, no review in the UK broadsheet newspapers, no sense that anybody at home had particularly taken notice of this major new work by a leading British composer. Fox turns 58 this year and the British contemporary music scene apparently remains mulishly unsure of where to place him and his music.

So what sort of composer is he? Listen to the cyclic structure and sparse melodic rhetoric of *inner* (1999-2001), 45 minutes of unaccompanied cello music, and you might be forgiven for claiming Fox to be a disciple of Morton Feldman and the American minimalists. If so, how to explain the microtonal smack of his

'Fox will wax lyrical about brass bands and then, a thought-bubble later, about the 1950s Darmstadt avant-garde'

hectic 1983 ensemble work *Etwas lebhaft*, with its clear allegiances to Michael Finnissy and Brian Ferneyhough? Or the logic-hunting-for-itself Stravinskian play of *Straight Lines in Broken Times*? (1992)? Or *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (1992), Fox's double-choir part-song which relates, albeit obliquely, to Britten and Tippett?

Drill deeper and it becomes clear that conceptual leaps of faith typical of a brain hard-wired into the mysteries of John Cage and an occasional instrumental texture that betrays an interest in Luigi Nono and Helmut Lachenmann are also integral to Fox's art. So, again, what sort of composer is he? Easy. He's a minimalist, maximalist, central European, conceptual, pastoral, German, English composer/sound artist who, when creating installations and text-based pieces with the poets Ian McMillan and Ian Duhig, has tested the boundaries of music itself.

But any composer attempting to reconcile Tippett with Lachenmann, Britten with Cage, is surely a dilettante who ought not to be trusted? To 'get' Fox's music you need to understand his background. Born in York in 1955 to his German mother and English father, Fox will wax lyrical about Yorkshire brass bands and then, a thought-bubble later, about the 1950s Darmstadt avant-garde. *On Ilkka Moor balt 'at meets Gruppen*. Explaining another formative inspiration, he has talked about the irresistible pull of what he calls



Christopher Fox performs his own *Catalogue irraisonné* (1999-2001)

'mythic America': jazz, rock, the beat poets, the 'new journalism' of Tom Wolfe. Fox recalls being among the tiny audience who in 1974 attended a British concert by the little-known American composer Philip Glass; hearing John Peel play Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians* on his Radio 1 show was another ear-opening experience.

Truth is, Cage into Britten won't go, and the 12-tone processes that Fox has found so intriguing in music by Schoenberg and Stockhausen, which are predicated entirely on the stability of equal temperament, could sit uncomfortably with his obsession with alternative tuning systems. But his solution has been to design intelligently each new piece from scratch, the function of every working part carefully thought through, nothing taken for granted. A sequence of works Fox calls *Generic Compositions* (1999-2001) is built from the conceit that instruments tell composers what to do; harmonic overtones are allowed to ring free, basic percussion choreography is put under scrutiny, Fox scores for 'a sliding instrument' or any 'bowed instrument', the point being to explore how instruments might behave if composers didn't insist on imposing their 'art music' upon them. In the solo piano *lliK.relliK* (1991-93), the heat of Jerry Lee Lewis and stride piano is systemically filtered and sieved; *für Johannes Kepler* (2005-07; dedicated to the 17th-century astronomer who calculated what became known as the 'music of the spheres') mixes earthly equal temperament on voice and viola with a space odyssey of complex tuning ratios sustained on an electric keyboard.

We like to know where we stand with composers. Comfort is considered a good thing. But Fox's music cuts right across – and into – the customary stylistic affiliations. The surface of *lliK.relliK* is smooth and logical, like a bank statement, as Fox shifts motifs up and down the keyboard. Or is it? At some point an awareness of the ornate mathematical systems that are keeping the whole thing afloat grows, and it's for us to judge how that number-crunching affects sound from moment to moment. Fox's simplicity is, it turns out, a complex business. **G**

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



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SESSION REPORT Deutsche Motette

Work Music by Strauss, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Rheinberger and Cornelius

Artists Choirs of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and King's College London

Venue St John's, Upper Norwood, London Conductors Geoffrey Webber and David Trendell

Producer Paul Baxter Date of session July 5, 2012 Words Andrew Mellor

Last time the choir of King's College London decamped south of the river to revel in the generous acoustic of St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, they were singing Allegri – floating the pure top Cs of his *Miserere* through the church's vaulted red brick arches. A year later, things are a little busier – on the printed scores, in those resonating acoustics, and in the vestry.

Delphian has assembled the so-called 'superchoir', a meeting of the young voices of King's with those of the choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, to record fearsome German repertoire including Strauss's 16-part *Deutsche Motette*. 'Yes, it is a little different from the Allegri...it's quite tricky in fact,' laughs David Trendell as he prepares to conduct the first take of the giant fugal section that forms the apex of the piece. Some time between then and when he sat down to write his booklet essay, that summation had morphed from 'tricky' to 'exceptionally difficult'.

And he's not wrong. There's something peculiarly fascinating about watching these young voices, half of whom have only known the other half for a matter of weeks, grappling with sounds which are so obviously external to their normal musical diet. 'It's so different from what we're used to singing in Chapel,' says Susannah Bagnall, a soprano in the Gonville and Caius choir. 'There are these massive textures and so many parts – all the way up to top Ds and down to very low notes too.'

Those notes are plentiful, unrelenting, and strewn about the chromatic scale. There are passages when the ensemble's tuning

needs fixing, others where it needs to recalibrate balance.

All the while it's punishingly hard to restart this giant polyphonic engine and to maintain the music's atmospheric weight. When the energy flags, a big-boned bass at the back is on hand with enthusiastic banter. 'It's more to entertain myself really,' he tells me when I track him down: Alex Jones, a history student at King's. 'I think if you let yourself get too frustrated, especially with music like this, it just means you're going to sing badly. You have to relax somehow.'

Delphian's CD, which takes its title from the imposing *Deutsche Motette*, charts the course of Romantic choral music in Germany from Schubert up to Strauss – an area of repertoire unjustly eclipsed, in Trendell's words, by the high-profile orchestral and chamber works that flowed from the same composers' pens. 'I've worked quite a lot on late-19th- and early-20th-century German music – I know the style and so

'There's no greater resource than having a world-class musician in the field sat on my left-hand side'

– Paul Baxter, producer



1 Underneath the arches: David Trendell conducts the combined Cambridge and London choirs at St John the Evangelist

2 Conductor Geoffrey Webber (right) scrutinises the score in the control room with Delphian producer Paul Baxter

3 Performer and producer concentrate on disentangling Strauss's knotty lines



does Geoffrey [Webber],’ says Trendell. He takes on the Strauss and Cornelius; Webber the Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Rheinberger.

The latter’s *Abendlied* feels like an oasis after the Strauss. Trendell and Webber have traded their control room/podium places and it’s fascinating to witness how the differing energy of the two conductors affects the poise of the room. Webber has his work cut out as the clock ticks well over 9pm and suddenly the student jokes and bizarre slips don’t seem so funny. He asks for a simple cadence in Brahms’s *O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf* to be sung again but with the printed scores momentarily discarded. An old trick, but the sound is immediately more shapely and more radiant – with more of the setting sun about it. Nobody in the room is surprised by the sudden transformation.

In the control room Paul Baxter seems far closer in generation to the students than to the conductors, despite the fact that he owns and runs the label the disc will appear on and has the titter-inducing task of hurrying the two academics on via the speaker when they get bogged down in musicological detail. His respect for them, though, is propulsive. ‘It can be a mixed blessing having practising musicians as co-producers,’ he says. ‘But they do better understand the difficulties of performance practice, and for me there’s no greater resource than having a world-class musician in the field sat on my left-hand side.’

However familiar you are with the recording process, there’s still something odd about listening through headphones to music sung in a spacious, echoing acoustic while that singing is happening in real time in the room next door. ‘Given the rich complexity of the Strauss score, I needed lots of space to let the multiple lines breathe,’ Baxter explains. And the key to correct microphone placement? ‘I can choose which mic signals to use afterwards in order to most faithfully represent what was going on in the room at the time, so that’s easy: get together all your best Neumanns and put them everywhere!’ **G**

► ‘Deutsche Motette’ is reviewed on page 83

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London Symphony Orchestra
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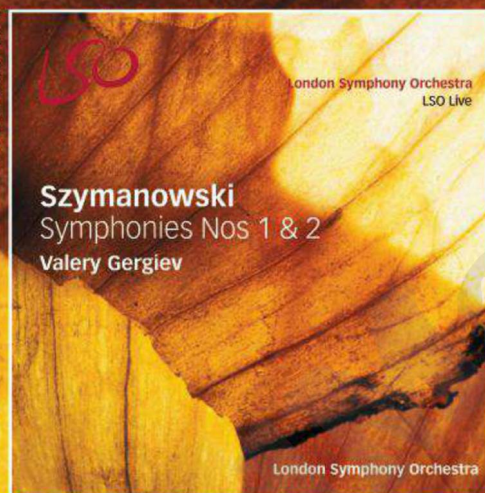
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Tasmin Little

The violinist on recording Britten's Concerto and her love of taking music to unusual places

What I have always enjoyed about my life as a performer is how every year is completely different. My calendar has few fixtures and, being a spontaneous person, this suits me completely. Last year was frenetically busy with many trips abroad, to America, Australia and Europe, as well as four recordings.

No process so completely ensures my rapid development as recording. Listening back to oneself in perspective and then immediately rethinking a phrase or detail is both liberating and educational, and my performance of a piece of music is always entirely different once I have recorded it. This year, I am looking forward to collaborating with two of my favourite conductors, Edward Gardner and Sir Andrew Davis, both of whom are absolutely inspiring in the studio.

I worked with Edward on the Britten Violin Concerto – it was a tremendous experience to finally record it. As a young girl, I had always adored Ida Haendel's recording with Paavo Berglund and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra – her passion and complete commitment shone through, as well as the searing depth of emotion inherent in the work. During the recording sessions, I wanted to make sure that the beauty and lyricism were maintained, and to keep the momentum in the violent rhythmic elements. Luckily, Edward was in the same frame of mind and fully supported these ideas with some of the most exciting *tuttis* I've ever heard in my life!

One of my trips this year takes me to a remote part of China where I'm organising a three-day concert series. I love making music in places where it is not usually heard – this is the ethos of my project 'The Naked Violin', for which I received the *Gramophone* Award for Audience Innovation in 2008. The project is still going strong and I regularly involve myself in the community, wherever it is I happen to be performing. Recently in the USA, I gave workshops and masterclasses, and coached high-school students. My violin has visited many unusual places (including once circling an oil rig!), and the power of music never ceases to amaze and inspire me.

Another recent highlight of my diary has been putting together my three-day residency at London's excellent chamber-music venue, Kings Place. Just as I enjoy devising recital programmes, I have

'The power of music never ceases to amaze and inspire me'

always loved thinking up a series of concerts. The opening concert's journey spanned from Bach to Brahms; the second night led the audience from the Romantic period into Impressionism, concluding with the Piano Trio gem by Ravel. Finally, we travelled from late-Romantic Strauss into 20th-century works by Debussy, finishing with the extraordinary Bartók *Contrasts*, written for the clarinetist Benny Goodman.



A recent trip to Beijing – I'm returning to China later this year



Taking a break during recording sessions with Sir Andrew Davis



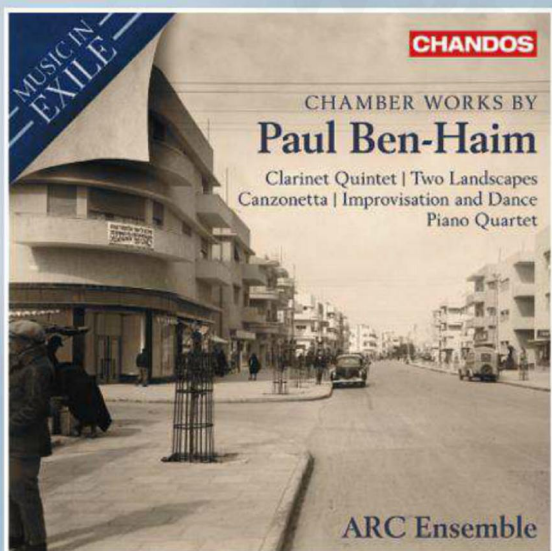
At the Wallace and Gromit Prom 2012 – my violin's next to the tiny model of Gromit's



Circling an oil rig in 2008 – I got a chance to drive the boat, too!

There's a curious thing about Bartók. Many concert promoters dread being offered a programme with his name on the list but there is something primal and evocative about his music to a listener with no preconceptions. I remember going to play in Maghaberry Prison in Northern Ireland to a small group of prisoners in the hospital wing. I played a mixture of repertoire and invited them to ask me questions – to no effect. My silent inmates seemed impossible to engage with, including one man sitting directly in front of me with his bowed head permanently in his hands. Under pressure, I explained I was going to play them a slow movement by Bartók, and suggested they experience this with their eyes closed. As my final harmonics died away, there was an extraordinary atmosphere. Finally, the guy in the front row lifted his head and said, 'That was absolutely beautiful'. But this was not the first time Bartók's music has elicited a somewhat surprising reaction. In a hostel for homeless people, Jacki (recently released from prison) spontaneously started dancing to the *Romanian Dances* – closely followed by a man who was obviously a fan of *Riverdance*. If I hadn't been playing so fast, I'd have joined in too – it was absolutely wonderful! **G**

► To read *Gramophone's* review of Tasmin Little playing Britten, turn to page 53



Disc of the Month

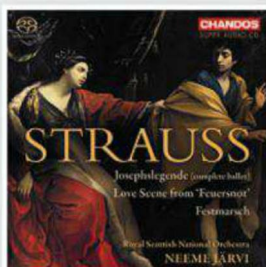
Music in Exile

Ben-Haim

The Grammy-nominated ARC Ensemble presents Volume 1 in a new chamber series, which explores the music of composers who were forced to flee Europe during the 1930s. Included on this disc are the Piano Quartet, Clarinet Quintet, and *Two Landscapes* by Paul Ben-Haim, the German-born Jewish composer who in 1933 immigrated to Palestine.

CHAN 10769

CHANDOS New Releases



Strauss

Josephslegende (complete ballet)

The complete score of Richard Strauss's epic ballet *Josephslegende* is here complemented by the Love Scene from *Feuersnot* and the early *Festmarsch*. All are performed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by Neeme Järvi who in 2012 celebrated his thirty-year recording career with Chandos Records.

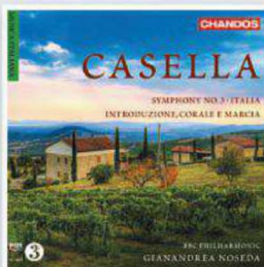
CHSA 5120



British Violin Sonatas, Vol. 1

This is Volume 1 in a new survey of British violin sonatas, performed by the exclusive Chandos artist Tasmin Little and the highly acclaimed pianist Piers Lane. Together they here perform seldom-recorded works by Sir William Walton, Howard Ferguson, and Benjamin Britten.

CHAN 10770



Casella

Orchestral Works, Vol. 3

This disc forms part of our ongoing survey of orchestral works by Alfredo Casella. The BBC Philharmonic and Gianandrea Noseda perform the Symphonic Rhapsody *Italia*, the Third Symphony, and the *Introduzione, Corale e Marcia* for large orchestral forces. *International Record Review* described Vol. 2 as a 'remarkable disc'.

CHAN 10768

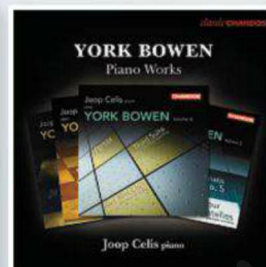


Britten

The Choral Edition

Tying in with the centenary of Britten's birth this year, this three-disc compilation brings together a large selection of early and late choral works, performed by The Finzi Singers under Paul Spicer. The box set includes *A Boy Was Born*, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, and Choral Dances from *Gloriana*, and is available at a special price.

CHAN 10771(3) X



Bowen

Works for Piano

This box set brings together for the first time four previously released discs, covering many of York Bowen's best piano works, all performed by the Dutch pianist Joop Celis. *Gramophone* described Volume 2 as 'triumphant... not a single piece on this excellently recorded disc could be in more sensitive hands'. The set is available at a special price.

CHAN 10774(4) X



Otto Klemperer

Peter Quantrill pays tribute to a conductor who owed his early career to Mahler and went on to become one of the most influential conductors of the 20th century


Making sense of Otto Klemperer the musician through his recorded legacy is more than usually like looking down the wrong end of a telescope. The image of the conductor as Moses, gaunt and unyielding, derives largely from the last decade of Klemperer's long and chaotic life. His story could be said to begin and end with Mahler, the conductor as much as the composer. The wonky gait of Kapellmeister Mahler in Cologne provided Klemperer with his first memory. As a young tyro he assisted at an early performance of the Second Symphony and prevailed upon Mahler to write a card of recommendation 'which opened all doors'. Klemperer kept it on his person ever afterwards and returned to the older man's music both in his own compositions, written during the manic periods of the bipolar disorder that afflicted him all his life, and in performances, especially of the Second Symphony.

'Steht alles in der Partitur [It's all in the score]', wrote Mahler and it should be in this light (coloured by the 19th-century Romantic culture in which artists took ownership of works) that Mahler's retouchings of Beethoven should be understood, and indeed Klemperer's use of them. Every generation claims its own special access to a new kind of textual fidelity in order to find its own accommodation with the unresolvable paradox of working with dead men's material while belonging to the here and now, breathing new life into old testaments.

Back in 1924, Wolfgang Stresemann noted of a concert with the Berlin Philharmonic that 'his approach stood in almost diametrical contrast to those of Furtwängler and Walter. It was less concerned with expression and feeling. At the core of his interpretations stood form, structure and a relentless determination...to provide an objective realisation of the score.' A key phrase in this testimony is 'concerned with'. Klemperer doesn't underscore the pathos of the ninth symphonies of Dvořák and Mahler, not because such feeling is foreign to the work but precisely the opposite, because it inheres within each bar. The music does the expressing, not the conducting. On the face of it, this looks like an article of faith for most 20th-century musicians, including practitioners of the historically informed performance movement, but Klemperer was far more influential upon the conducting of Pierre Boulez. Klemperer's legacy has yet to be ramified, but any examination of it must surely focus on the shape of the house and not the brickwork: 'Better you play wrong notes, but in time,' we can hear him (on Archiphon ARC-WU042) genially yelling in 1942 to a New York youth orchestra who appear to give him no other choice while rehearsing Brahms.

Decades later, as intendant of the BPO, Stresemann issued a return invitation to Klemperer, who had become the darling of Philharmonia audiences in London, but what he called the conductor's 'non-*espressivo*' approach clashed with the orchestra's corporate identity now that it had been overtaken by Karajan (as you can hear on Testament). Times had changed, and yet Klemperer had not. Just as a Beethoven Fifth in New York in 1926 was greeted by a local critic as being 'on a scale of sonorous tonal grandeur as yet not surpassed' but also

unpolished, these qualities were still evident in the marmoreal last symphony cycle in London in 1970, preserved by BBC television and available on YouTube. In a sense, EMI's recordings allow us to hear a 'true' Klemperer, one that didn't always emerge in concert because of the vagaries of his mood and rehearsal availability. The sad lack of recorded testimony to Klemperer's revolutionary work at the Kroll Opera House in Berlin (1927-31), beyond a few excerpts and orchestral pieces, only enhances the value and interest of the six complete operas left to us from his time in Budapest (1947-50). In their breathless intensity and yet breadth of understanding, *Lohengrin* and *Così fan tutte* especially show us the man who took Berlin by storm in the 1920s.

Secular rites took on talismanic powers throughout the career of this sceptical Jew-turned-Catholic-turned-Jew: not only Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony but also Mozart's *Masonic Funeral Music* and Beethoven's Ninth, and most of all *Fidelio*, live recordings of which (in Budapest and London) triumphantly embody what his biographer Peter Heyworth called Klemperer's 'almost Mahlerian clarity of texture'. If that appreciation sounds odd, it is because we are the ones out of time. 'We should now atone for all that was done against Mahler,' remarked Aladár Tóth, then director of the Budapest Opera, remembering how the young Mahler had been driven in 1891 from his directorship of the opera by political machinations. It was Tóth who secured Klemperer's services and defended and protected him against criticism, personal scandal and penury. 'After all, Klemperer is his greatest heir.' 

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



Beethoven *Fidelio*

Jurinac, Vickers; Royal Opera, Covent Garden / Klemperer

Testament mono © SBT2 1328 (2/04)

DEFINING MOMENTS

• 1929 – *Redefining Dutchman*

As director of Berlin's Kroll Opera, he oversees a production of *Der fliegende Holländer* that announces new ways of seeing not just Wagner but opera.

• 1939 – *Health crisis*

An operation for a benign but tennis-ball-sized brain tumour leaves him with paralysis in his right side and a heightened mania that leads to personal uproar and a fatally damaged reputation in the US and elsewhere.

• 1954 – *Rebirth at the Philharmonia*

Walter Legge invites him to conduct the Philharmonia Orchestra; he becomes the orchestra's life president a decade later when Legge attempts to disband it.

*'The music does
the expressing,
not the conducting'*

Otto Klemperer rehearsing
Beethoven's Ninth with the
Philharmonia Orchestra in
November 1957

PHOTOGRAPHY: ERICH AUERBACH/GETTY IMAGES

Back to Bruckner's roots

Philip Clark talks to *Franz Welser-Möst* about Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, the 'Romantic'

Franz Welser-Möst is a Bruckner junkie. His new DVD with the Cleveland Orchestra of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony was recorded live at St Florian Monastery in Upper Austria, where Bruckner is interred under the organ he once played in his role as church organist. But taking Bruckner to St Florian is about more than returning the music to its spiritual home. 'When I performed his Fifth and Eighth Symphonies in St Florian,' he tells me in his office inside the Staatsoper in Vienna, 'I realised something very special. Problems of balance don't exist. I'm speculating now, but I think Bruckner tried to transpose the acoustics of St Florian into the concert hall. And by the time he wrote the 1888 version – the one I chose to perform – balance was no longer an issue.'

Welser-Möst takes me inside the score, shows me why. 'Look at this passage, first movement, page 32. The upper woodwinds are marked triple *forte*, *marcato*. Underneath, the second and third trumpets *crescendo* over four bars, then the first trumpet leads with a *crescendo* into the oncoming *fortissimo*. Using these dynamics, Bruckner guarantees the trumpets will have presence; had they been *fortissimo* throughout, they would have been too dominant. This is not typical organ-writing, where you pull out 40 registers. Bruckner is colouring and refining, giving the musical phrasing added meaning through his instrumentation.'

Bruckner as organist, that hoary old 'cathedrals of sound' cliché, could be an interpretative cul-de-sac, Welser-Möst warns. 'If he was only interested in religion, why did he stop writing church music? This last version of the Fourth Symphony is a very interesting

'Bruckner tried to transpose the acoustics of St Florian into the concert hall'

– Franz Welser-Möst

example of where he tried to go. It's clear he has looked at other composers, Mahler especially, to figure out how to communicate more efficiently his basic musical ideas to the audience.

'Architecturally the form is Classical, even though he expands it with a third subject. He adds material that goes way back in history: Gregorian chant, elements of the Baroque. He is totally obsessed with the sound world Richard Wagner created, while harmonically he was way ahead of his own time.'

I'm taken on an accelerated journey through the symphony's metronome-mark key lines. Welser-Möst points out that, in a symphony stretching across 70 minutes, the only really slow music



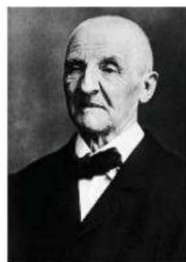
Franz Welser-Möst: taking a fresh approach to Bruckner

happens in the coda. The symphony begins at crotchet=72; the second movement is crotchet=66. But now the arithmetic gets interesting – the third movement is crotchet=126, the half note of 63 clearly related to the second movement, and the finale recapitulates crotchet=72. I ask Welser-Möst about the functionality of these tempo relationships during performance. 'Just putting beautiful moments together is a nonsense,' he explains. 'When you start, you have to know where you want to go. What tempo for the first movement? Well, the second subject is a typical slow Bohemian polka. There is only one tempo. And therefore also for the beginning.'

If the presence of a Bohemian polka ties the symphony to specifics of time and place, Welser-Möst is keen for me to understand how this operates musically. 'If you look over the hills from St Florian, the horizon doesn't have an end. So, I think, rather than phrasing the first motif in the French horns from the first note, you need to phrase it beyond the end of the last note: a feeling of lots more to come.'

And, as a final insight, the nuance of a single *staccato* mark. 'In that famous opening theme in the *Scherzo*, on the French horns, the last note is the only one without a *staccato*. Why? Because Bruckner wants it to echo. He had an extraordinary imagination for space, how music could become part of the environment.' **G**

► To read Gramophone's review, turn to page 54



The historical view

Anton Bruckner

Letter to a friend, c1874, outlining ideas about his Fourth Symphony's first movement

'Medieval city – at dawn – early-morning calls from the city towers – the gates open – the knights gallop out into the fields on their proud horses – the magic of the forest surrounds them – the rustling of the leaves – the song of birds.'

Robert Simpson

The Essence of Bruckner (Victor Gollancz: 1993)

Simpson warns against taking Bruckner's subtitle, *Romantic*, too literally. The second movement, meanwhile, sounds 'as if it were dreamt; sometimes we seem close to it, sometimes we seem to see it from so great a distance that it appears almost to stand still'.

Benjamin Korstvedt

19th-Century Music (University of California Press: 1996)

'Bruckner himself never evinced any doubt about the authority of his text [the third, 1888, version]; to the contrary, he authorised its publication, took part in preparing the premiere, and attended at least two later performances.'

QUIZ



The Vienna I knew as a child

Who am I?

Pit your wits against Gramophone

Born in Vienna in the latter part of the 19th century, I was married three times: first to a composer, then to an architect and finally to a novelist and poet.

I studied composition with Zemlinsky but my first husband disapproved of my musical aspirations.

One of my daughters died tragically young and her death inspired one of the great violin concertos of the 20th century.

From the 1940s onwards I lived in the USA, first in California and finally in New York.

Several of my songs have been published and have been recorded by singers including

Julie Boulianne, Lilli Paasikivi and Christina Högman.

Leonard Bernstein was an admirer of mine and my presence at some of his rehearsals could well have helped him develop his musical interpretations.



My second husband, an architect

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The answer was **Charles Koechlin**. The first correct answer drawn was submitted by Malcolm Griffiths of Dorking, Surrey, UK, who wins a selection of CDs.

New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert

"... A Nordic breeze has blown through New York's new music scene..."

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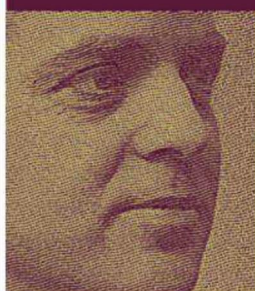
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NOTES & LETTERS

Brahms and the chiffchaff • Fischer-Dieskau, mastersinger • Sawallisch's starring role

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Pianists and Sir Colin

As a great admirer of Sir Colin Davis (Tribute, June, page 27), I was struck by his occasional and somewhat barbed comments about virtuoso pianists. Speaking in the film *The Art of Piano: Great Pianists of the 20th Century*, he drew attention to what he saw as the antisocial nature of the enterprise: 'All those hours spent alone at the piano, proving you are master of it rather than the other way round,' as I recall.

I know that he did admire at least one pianist greatly, though. Shortly after Claudio Arrau's death in the early 1990s, he contributed to a programme about Arrau on BBC Radio 3. He spoke warmly of many aspects of Arrau's pianism but also of his total awareness of all the orchestral detail and of his collegiate approach – 'unlike so many other egomaniacs,' as Sir Colin put it!

Steve Elder

Bournemouth, Dorset, UK

Fischer-Dieskau's Sachs appeal

While Arnold Whittall (Collection, May, page 118) would surely be correct that a number of operatic roles sat uneasily with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, I don't believe he is right about his Hans Sachs and his suggestion that the portrayal is not 'rounded' is wide of the mark. I like everything about this characterisation: the subtle weighting of words suggests not only a master poet but a man of Ulysses-like strategems; the youthful quality at the top of the voice suggests the danger of the flirtation with Eva; the very distinctiveness of the voice allows him to stand clear of the seven other bass-baritone characters on stage at the same time in the first act; and the sense of energy and natural superiority is also just Hans Sachs. To me this interpretation is not merely good but the most complete and multi-dimensional realisation of Wagner's creation we are ever likely to encounter.

Another artist who made a deep impression on me in Jochum's *Meistersinger* was Peter Lagger as Pogner. He did not have immense international fame and he did not live all that long after recording it, but he gives the most touching rendition of Pogner's oration that I know – and the comparison here is with several of the greatest bass singers of the recording era.

John Stone

London, UK

Letter of the Month



Brahms and the inspirational chiffchaff

Brahms's birdsong

Having spent an afternoon digging in the garden, I found I had the codetta theme from the finale of Brahms's Second Symphony running through my head (Scotch snap rhythm at bar 142 or 2'46" in the Concertgebouw/Haitink recording). I couldn't work out why, as I hadn't listened to it for some time. The next occasion I went out into the garden, the reason struck me: I recognised the flinty call of the chiffchaff, a member of the warbler family,

and realised that this must have been the inspiration for Brahms's eccentric theme.

Chiffchaffs are found all over northern Europe in summer, so Brahms would have heard them in the Austrian province of Carinthia, where the symphony was composed over the summer months of 1873. Do other readers have similar examples of the outdoor Brahms?

Jonathan Zoob

Burwash, East Sussex, UK

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**PRESTO
CLASSICAL**

Singing Sawallisch's praises

Mike Ashman's tribute to Wolfgang Sawallisch (June, page 20) was a delight to read and makes one even more grateful for the late maestro's legacy, especially the operas by Strauss and Wagner.

Sawallisch's career spanned many years and for this reason, perhaps, the 1980s were virtually omitted in the article. A string of fine Strauss opera recordings were made for various labels then, including *Arabella* (1977), *Intermezzo* (1980), *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1987), *Friedenstag* (1988) and *Elektra* (1990). They all revealed Sawallisch to be a superb Strauss conductor, while the two earliest sets, featuring Julia Varady and Helen Donath as a lovely pair of sisters, and Lucia Popp's enchanting performance in the role of Christine, remain especially memorable.

However, for me, the most interesting moment when listening to a Sawallisch recording came in his legendary set of *Cappriccio* featuring Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. In the 10th scene, before the words-versus-music debate was revived, I listened attentively, and waited curiously and patiently, for that famous line sung by Sawallisch himself. It was worth waiting for! *Wei-Chin Chen*
New Taipei City, Taiwan

A record anniversary

As well as the well-celebrated bicentenaries of Verdi and Wagner, this year also sees a very important centenary. On November 10, 1913, the first-ever complete gramophone recording of a full-scale classical work was made. This was Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It was recorded in Berlin by the Gramophone Company and was played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of their great chief conductor Arthur Nikisch. It was issued on four HMV 12in 78rpm shellac records at five shillings and sixpence each, total cost £1 2s, a massive outlay at the time!

This was an event of huge significance, even though it was made with the primitive acoustical process in which the orchestra, much reduced in size, had to cluster round a big horn. The performance is amazingly classical and coherent – it is hard to believe that it was made 100 years ago.

Michael Hanna
West Sussex, UK

We'll be marking this important anniversary in our September issue – Ed

Editorial notes

Harpsichordist Rafael Puyana (obituary, May, page 23) was Colombian, not Columbian.

OBITUARIES

Composers from France, Sweden, the UK and the USA and a great Hungarian cellist

HENRI DUTILLEUX

Composer
Born January 22, 1916
Died May 22, 2013

Along with Elliott Carter, Henri Dutilleux represented a generation of musicians with roots almost back into the 19th century; certainly his music can be seen in a direct line from that of his great predecessors Debussy and Ravel. He studied with Jean and Noël Gallon, Henri Büsser and Maurice Emmanuel at the Paris Conservatoire. In 1938 he won the Prix de Rome but was unable to enjoy the traditional stay in Rome due to the war, during which he worked as a medical orderly. During the latter years of the war he worked as pianist, arranger and teacher, and conductor of the chorus at the Paris Opéra.

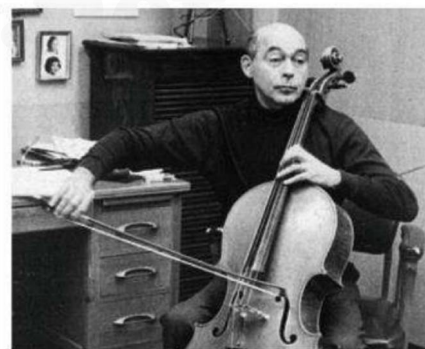
Dutilleux married the French pianist Geneviève Joy in 1946 and wrote his official Op 1, a Piano Sonata, for her. Two symphonies followed in 1951 and 1959. *Métaboles* of 1956 was premiered by Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra and established Dutilleux's reputation in North America. In 1970 Rostropovich premiered the cello concerto *Tout un monde lointain*.

Dutilleux turned from orchestral music to concentrate on chamber-scale works including a string quartet, *Ainsi la nuit* (1976). He returned to orchestral composition with *Timbres, espace, mouvement* (1978), inspired by van Gogh. The violin concerto *L'arbre des songes*, for Isaac Stern, is unusual in his output in being entirely atonal. His last work, the song-cycle *Le temps l'horloge* for Renée Fleming, was first performed complete in 2009 and is sumptuously scored with an almost Impressionist sound-palette.

Dutilleux's musical voice was highly individual and also very French, with its emphasis on texture and colour, but early-20th-composers like Stravinsky and Bartók had a powerful impact on him. **James Jolly**



Henri Dutilleux (with Tobias Picker) in 2006



'Superb technique': cellist János Starker

JÁNOS STARKER

Cellist
Born July 5, 1924
Died April 28, 2013

János Starker started playing the cello aged only five and gave his first public performances a year later. He studied at the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, where his cello teacher was Adolf Schiffer; he was also greatly influenced by the composer and faculty member Leo Weiner. He made his professional debut aged 14 when he stepped in, on three hours' notice, and played the Dvořák Cello Concerto.

He remained in Budapest during the war and narrowly avoided the fate of his older brothers who were murdered by the Nazis; János spent three months in a Nazi internment camp. After the war he was appointed principal cello of the Budapest Opera and Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra. After losing the 1946 Geneva Cello Competition to his student Eva Janzer, Starker took a year away from playing to work on his technique in Paris. At the end of this period he recorded Kodály's Solo Cello Sonata, a phenomenally difficult work he would go on to record three more times and which he would make his own.

After leaving Soviet-occupied Hungary in 1948, Starker joined the Dallas Symphony and then the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, where he came to the attention of his fellow Hungarian, the conductor Fritz Reiner. In 1952 Reiner lured Starker to become principal cello of the Chicago Symphony when he was appointed music director. In 1958 Starker resumed a solo career which he combined with teaching at the University of Indiana. The list of his cello students reads like a who's who of the North American cello world.

Starker's playing style was characterised by a superb technique, a tightly focused tone and an intensity of sound. His discography – for Delos, DG, EMI, London, Mercury, Philips and Seraphim, among others – was extensive and embraced five different recordings of Bach's Solo Cello Suites, chamber music and the major cello concertos. **James Jolly**

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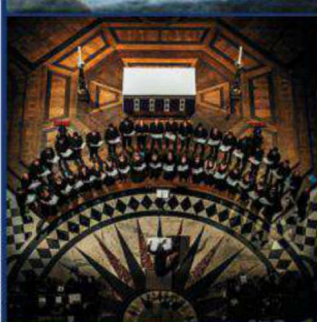
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STEVE MARTLAND

Composer

Born October 10, 1959

Died May 6, 2013

Liverpool-born Steve Martland's music, which acknowledged few boundaries, often led him to collaborate with players outside the classical world and is characterised by its vivid rhythmic life.



Martland studied at Liverpool University and then in the Netherlands with Louis Andriessen. In 1984 he attended the Berkshire Music Center to study composition with Gunther Schuller. His passionate belief in the role of the composer in society led him to work with children and he established an annual composition course for school children called Strike Out.

He often performed his own music with his Steve Martland Band, an 11-piece group. His often loudly voiced politics, primarily aimed at Margaret Thatcher's government, led him to create a multimedia work called *Albion* that fused music, text and film.

He wrote his largest orchestral work, *Babi Yar*, in 1983; it was later recorded for Factory Records. Other important scores include *Crossing the Border* (for the National Ballet, Amsterdam), *Danceworks* (for London Contemporary Dance Theatre) and *Tiger Dancing* (for the Henri Oguike Dance Company). He wrote *Street Songs* for Evelyn Glennie and the King's Singers.

James Jolly

ANDERS ELIASSON

Composer

Born April 3, 1947

Died May 20, 2013

Until his death, Anders Eliasson was arguably Sweden's greatest living composer – an artist who combined a rigorous and very Nordic anti-establishmentism with



a stringent sense of compositional discipline. Born in Borlänge in central Sweden in 1947, he studied at the Royal Stockholm Academy of Music with Ingvar Lidholm.

Eliasson experimented with electronic music but it was the acoustic work *Canto del vagabondo* (1979) that first brought him to the attention of the Swedish musical

community. His First Symphony (1989) alerted the international music scene to his relevance and talent; the piece won the Nordic Council Music Prize in 1992.

Eliasson went on to write three more symphonies, chamber and vocal works and a number of concertos. There is no denying the original feel of his sound world, marked out by its marrying of emotion and tension – expressive but taut, regimented but never constricted, with a discipline that reflected the Baroque music and jazz he so loved.

There was a feeling that Eliasson felt at odds with the more esoteric elements of the compositional community, a feeling encapsulated in the account of his arrival as a guest professor at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki in 1993. 'I'm Paavo Heininen, modernist,' proclaimed one of his colleagues by way of introduction. 'I'm Anders Eliasson, normal human being,' the Swede replied. **Andrew Mellor**

HAROLD SHAPERO

Composer and teacher

Born April 29, 1920

Died May 17, 2013

Harold Shapero was best known as the composer of the *Symphony for Classical Orchestra* (1947), perhaps the perfect expression of his neo-Stravinskian aesthetic. He first



came to notice when his *Nine-Minute Overture* (1940) was performed in 1941 by a student orchestra conducted by Copland. The Overture won the Rome Prize in the same year but the entry of the US into the Second World War prevented Shapero's travelling to Italy as part of the award. At that time Shapero was a pupil of Hindemith but he had previously studied with Slonimsky, Krenek and Walter Piston. Later he studied with Nadia Boulanger, through whom he was introduced to Stravinsky.

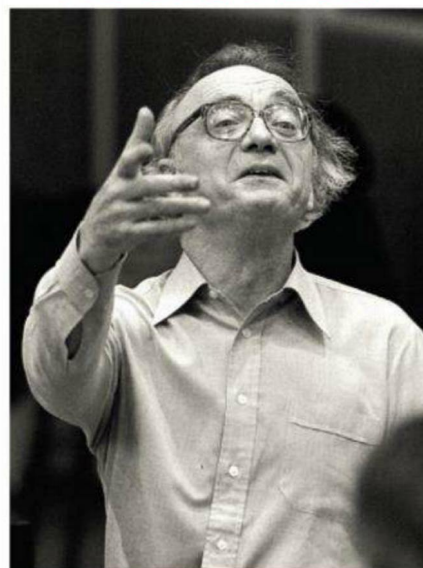
Shapero's list of orchestral works includes two further symphonies, orchestral and chamber works. His musical interests extended to other areas, as in his *On Green Mountain* for jazz ensemble (1957) and his long-standing interest in electronic music.

He was born in Massachusetts and died there peacefully in his sleep following a bout of pneumonia, aged 93. He is survived by his wife, Esther, and daughter Hannah (aka Pyra), both artists.

Guy Rickards

To read these obituaries in full, visit gramophone.co.uk/classical-music-news

NEXT MONTH AUGUST 2013



Brendel on Brendel

Writing for Gramophone, the great pianist celebrates the art of recording and the role it has played in his own exceptional career

Gergiev's expanding Mariinsky empire

Geoffrey Norris reports from the grand opening of the Mariinsky's new opera house

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Fabrice Fitch surveys this extraordinary collection of 16th-century English music and recommends the best recordings in this month's Collection

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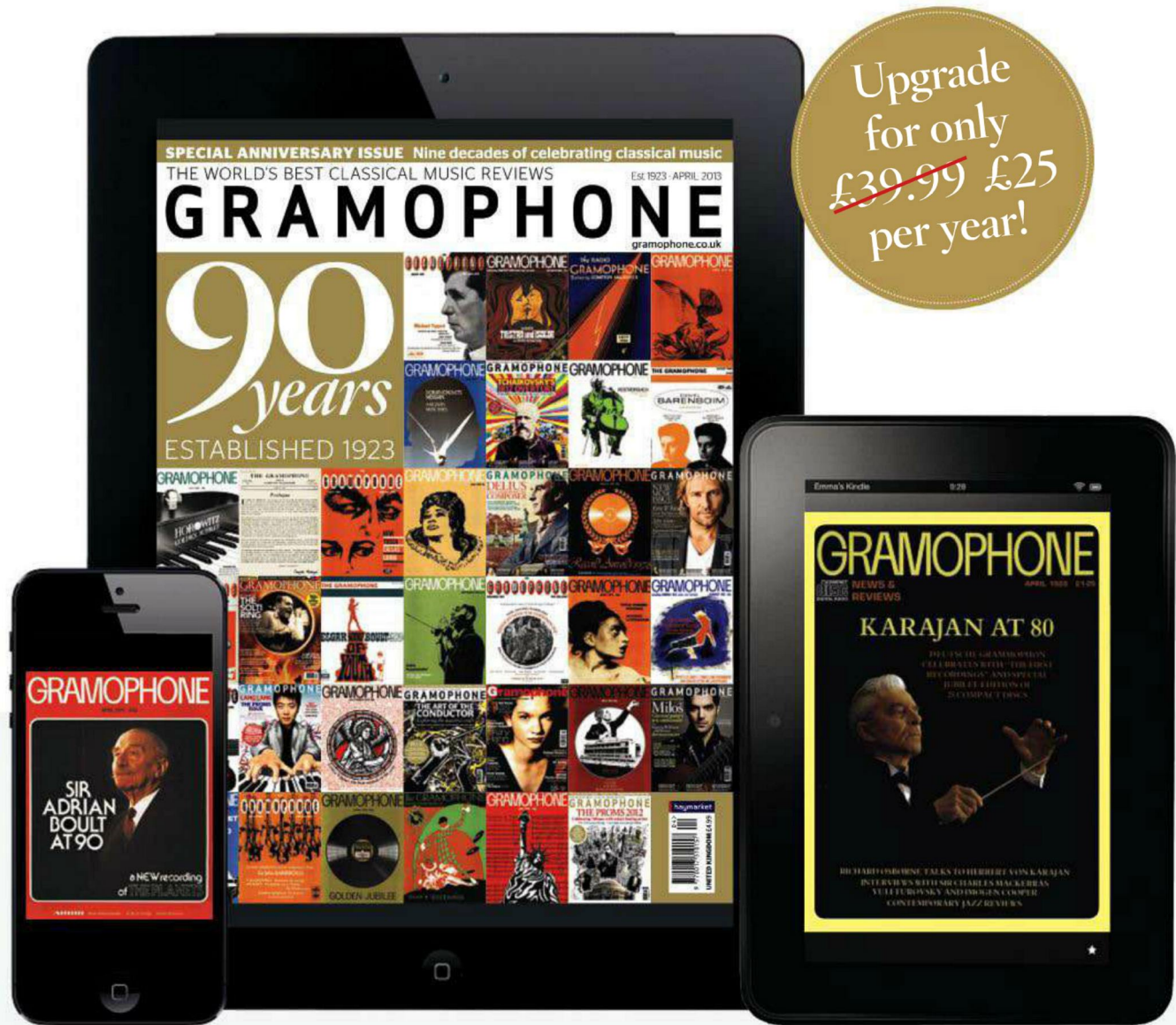
David Threasher picks his top 10 recordings of music for piano duo in this month's Specialist's Guide

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World

FACING WAGNER

As Daniel Barenboim prepares to conduct the first complete Ring cycle in a single Proms season, **Geoffrey Norris** encounters the musician for whom Wagner is the key to understanding all music



Piano-playing protégé:
Daniel Barenboim,
pictured here on
January 18, 1956, aged 13

I am in the middle of an interview,' Daniel Barenboim tells a caller on his mobile phone just as we are settling down to speak. 'I will ring you later.' This is evidently not the response that the person at the other end was hoping for, and Barenboim listens for a few seconds more. 'Very well, I will ring *him* later,' he says, his voice assuming just a hint of exasperation. He snaps the phone shut. 'So sorry, I'll turn it off,' he apologises, unwittingly providing for the eavesdropper a good idea of what it is like to be in constant demand as general music director of the Berlin State Opera. We meet not at the opera's home in Unter den Linden but at the Schiller Theater, where the company is currently lodging during renovations of its home base. On the afternoon and evening before, Barenboim had conducted a sublime performance of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, all five-and-a-half hours of it. The innocent observer might wonder whether that accounts for the fact that he is now lying supine on a couch, with his legs raised and resting on a large leather cube. But there is another reason. Last October he suffered a fall, injuring his back, and he has since been experiencing pain in his right hip and leg. Lying down reduces the misery and agony. The Argentine-born Israeli pianist and conductor has continued to work, and it was not until last month that he gave in to medical advice and was forced to cancel some performances at La Scala in Milan, where he is also music director.

While Barenboim has a repertoire as extensive as anybody's, he has steeped himself particularly in Wagner's operas. He has recorded most of them, reissued by Teldec last year on 34 CDs, and in this Wagner bicentenary he brings the Berlin State Opera to the BBC Proms for a performance over four evenings of *The Ring* tetralogy, which he has already conducted this year in Berlin. Barenboim has remarked that Wagner provides the key to understanding any music, a statement that, perhaps especially for those who are averse to or uncomfortable with Wagnerian music drama, invites some amplification. 'Wagner wrote a very good book on conducting [*Über das Dirigieren*],' explains Barenboim. 'I find it a very interesting and important book, because it shows you how he thought about different aspects of music and how everything is really related.' This concept of links has influenced Barenboim to the extent that he entitled his 2008 book of essays *Everything is Connected: The Power of Music*. 'Nothing is disconnected,' Barenboim continues. He cites as a particular instance the fact that *Parsifal* was the only opera that Wagner wrote specifically for the acoustical properties of the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth, inaugurated in 1876 some years after all the other operas were complete. '*Parsifal* sounds in Bayreuth unquestionably better than in any other pit in the world,' Barenboim asserts, meaning that there is an inseparable correlation between the perspective of the music and the dimensions and resonances of the auditorium. 'I think Wagner had this obsession

with a huge unit that is made up of millions of details,' he says, again offering an illustrative example. 'One of the most extraordinary things about Wagner is the symbiosis between the text and the music. He puts together the sounds of the notes with the sounds of the syllables. In other words, when you have a word that has a syllable that is particularly important and needs to be stressed, you can rest assured that something in the orchestra adds to it. I told the orchestra when we started rehearsing that we really had to observe fanatically all the minute instructions for the dynamics. They are very seldom respected, but in that way we could, in effect, stage the operas for blind people.'

Speaking of fanatics, there are those opera-goers who traverse the globe to attend any performance of *The Ring* that they can find. 'The effect of the music,' says Barenboim, 'is so often like a drug. But it is perfectly calculated – how Wagner builds up sections and repeats things three or four times, the first time *piano*, the second maybe with a *fortepiano* attack, then a *crescendo* and only the fourth time *fortissimo*. When it comes, it's overwhelming. He's playing with our ears. It might be bordering on the vulgar to say so, but it's like a woman who knows a man's body so well – every little corner of his body – and knows how to excite him. And that is what Wagner plays on. That is what he does with our ears.' Barenboim acknowledges that that might be why 'Wagner admirers are so fanatical, and also why his detractors have such apprehensions'. But, whether you like it or not, the impact of Wagner cannot be ignored. He mentions the famous comments that Tchaikovsky passed after attending the first *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth in 1876. With the last chords of *Götterdämmerung* he felt he had 'been released from captivity'. But, for all that Tchaikovsky found *The Ring* 'boring in places,' even he had to admit that it 'is one of the most significant events in the history of art'.

This will be the first time that a *Ring* cycle has been performed in a single Proms season, though Barenboim himself is no stranger to the Royal Albert Hall. He has been a frequent visitor to the Proms over many decades, notably in recent times with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra of musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries that he founded with Edward Said in 1999. He is not alone in calling the Proms 'the greatest music festival in the world,' and he considers that they play an important role on two levels. 'Firstly,' he says, 'there is what they offer to the public, at reasonable prices. This is amazing. The other aspect of them that I find extraordinary is the commitment to contemporary music. Just think that Henry Wood conducted Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces* in 1912.' Schoenberg composed them in 1909 and this was their world premiere, though Wood had to do battle with an orchestra that regarded them as a 'baffling novelty'. As the violinist Eugene Goossens recalled, Wood was 'cutting, thrusting, parrying and dissecting with that long white baton, fighting down the thing that all conductors have to fight sooner

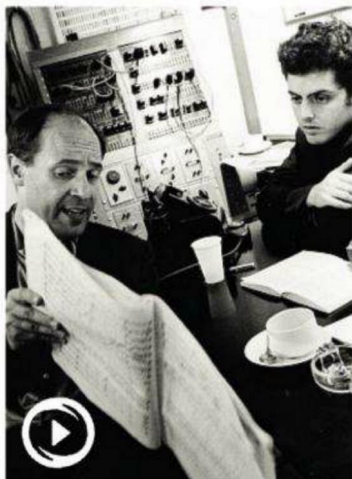
or later in varying degrees – the hostility of an orchestra which has fatally prejudged a novelty,' but that he 'eventually secured order out of chaos'. Nevertheless, as Barenboim says, the Proms' championship of new music retains its vibrancy. 'In order to attract young people, you might think the tendency would be towards very conventional, accessible programmes. But no, the programming of the Proms is amazingly rich and amazingly courageous.'

This leads on to Barenboim's own advocacy on behalf of contemporary music. He has formed especially close bonds with the music of Pierre Boulez and Elliott Carter, the latter of whom he first met over conversations about Wagner after conducting *The Ring* at Bayreuth. As Barenboim said in a tribute he wrote for the German newspaper *Die Zeit* after Carter's death last November at the age of 103, '[Carter] began to comment on the orchestration in the prelude to the second act of *Siegfried*. He knew all of the text — he knew everything and had a phenomenal ear!' In the same article Barenboim summed up Carter's key position in contemporary culture: 'For me personally, Elliott Carter was and remains one of the most meaningful composers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries because he represents substance. He was the living proof of uncompromising, complex music, which at first seems inaccessible. But it becomes accessible if one digs in and sees the development through. I believe that is Carter's great lesson: to always stay uncompromisingly focused on the substance of the music.' Since this is also unquestionably Barenboim's own credo, you can see why he and Carter enjoyed such a fruitful artistic relationship. Barenboim commissioned Carter's only opera *What Next?*, and conducted its premiere at the Berlin State Opera in 1999. Carter's *Partita* was included on a Teldec recording Barenboim made with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the 1990s, and Decca recently released the Staatskapelle/Barenboim disc of the Carter and Elgar Cello Concertos with Alisa Weilerstein as soloist.

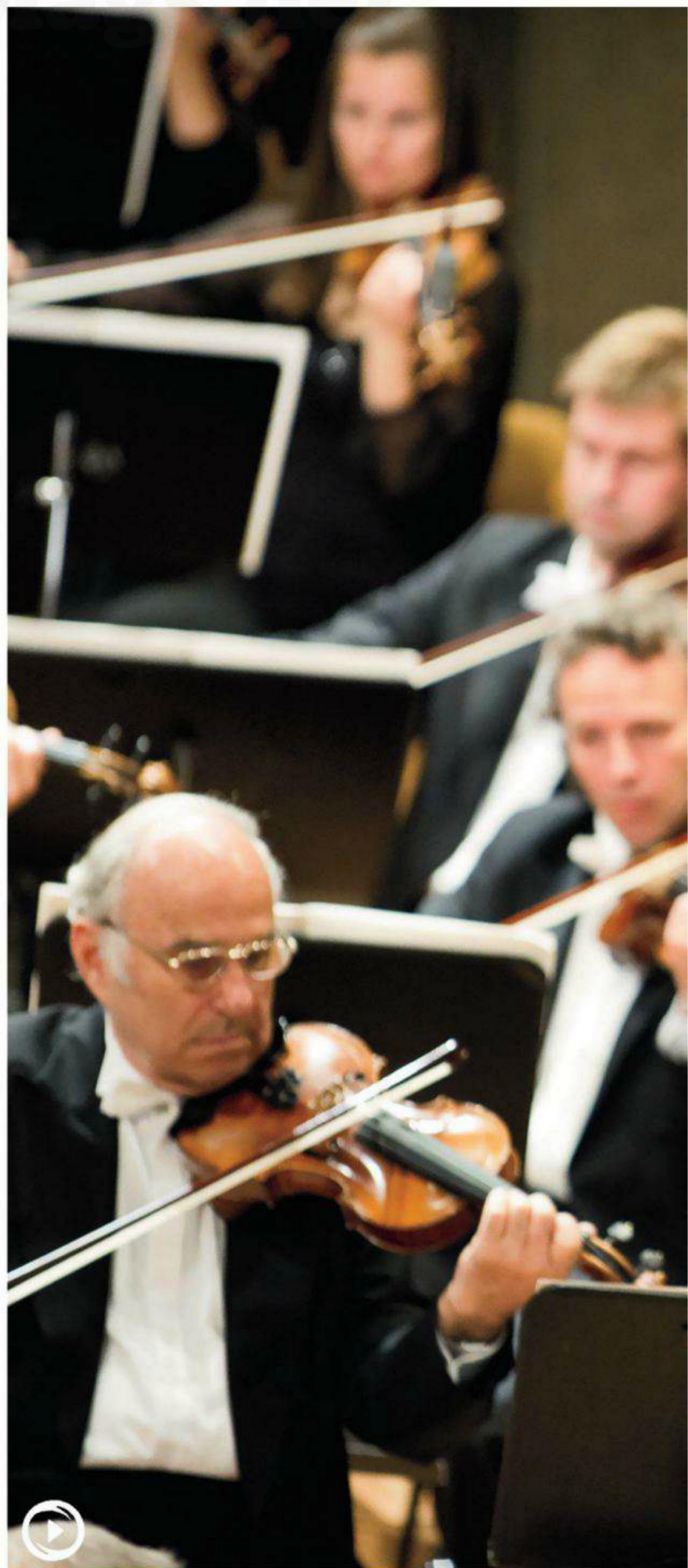
Barenboim's association with Boulez has developed on two fronts. As a pianist, Barenboim has recorded the Liszt concertos for DG with Boulez conducting the Staatskapelle, and Bartók's First and Third for EMI with Boulez and the New Philharmonia. As a conductor with the Paris Orchestra, Barenboim has recorded, for Erato, Boulez's *Notations I-IV*, *Rituel* and *Messagesquise*. Speaking in his book *Everything is Connected* about the personal impact Boulez and Carter have had on him, Barenboim writes, 'I have not only enjoyed conducting many works of Pierre Boulez and Elliott Carter, but have learned from this experience many important aspects of music-making that proved very enlightening and useful when returning to Beethoven and Wagner. The exploration of the music of today may be considered different from that of the music of the past in that it requires a greater

effort to discover it, and then to develop individual preferences and tastes as one has towards earlier music. If this is done only out of a sense of duty to contemporary music, there can be no joy and no critical differentiation in seeking out works that are worthy of being performed with the great music of the past. The importance of a contemporary piece can best be appreciated when juxtaposed in the same programme with, for example, a Beethoven symphony.'

And that is precisely what Barenboim has done in some revelatory concert series.



Daniel Barenboim with Pierre Boulez (left) at Abbey Road Studios, London, c1967



'The effect of The Ring is so often like a drug. But it's perfectly calculated. Wagner is playing with our ears'

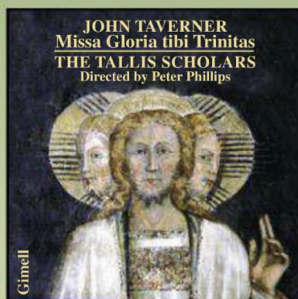


'Ensemble-playing with a unified purpose': Barenboim and his Berlin Staatskapelle



PETER PHILLIPS

*I'm thrilled that The Tallis Scholars have been voted into the **Gramophone Hall of Fame** – what an incredible list to be a part of – but I wish to emphasise that we are not done yet. In fact I confidently predict that the best is yet to come.*

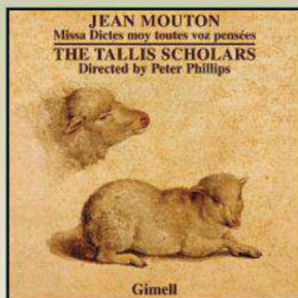


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A new recording of John Taverner's masterpiece will be released on the exact anniversary of The Tallis Scholars first concert on 3 November 1973.

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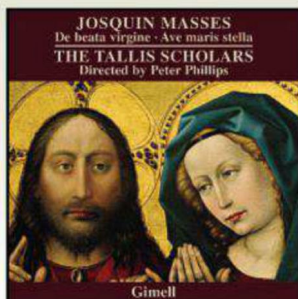
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'There should always be a special place for this kind of high flown perfection and the sense of timelessness it evokes.'
 CD Review, BBC Radio 3

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AUSTRALIA	October 26	Brisbane
	October 27	Sydney
	October 29	Melbourne
BELGIUM	August 25	Antwerp
	October 5	Bruges
ENGLAND	June 30	Clifton Cathedral
	July 10	Tewkesbury Abbey
	August 14	BBC Proms
	October 15	Cadogan Hall
	November 2	Canterbury Cathedral
	December 19	Smith Square
ESTONIA	July 3	Haapsalu
FRANCE	June 21	Paris
	July 30	Lessay
	August 16	St. Malo
	August 18	Sylvanes
GERMANY	July 9	Cologne
ITALY	August 01	Milan
LUXEMBOURG	June 28	Echternach
NETHERLANDS	September 20	Maastricht
	September 21	Enschede
NEW ZEALAND	October 19	Christchurch
	October 21	Wellington
	October 22	Napier
	October 23	Auckland
PORTUGAL	October 4	Evora
SCOTLAND	July 5 & 6	East Neuk Festival
	October 11 & 12	Glasgow
SPAIN	August 20	Avila
USA	November 15	Easton PA
	November 16	New York
	November 17	Yale
	December 4	San Francisco
	December 6, 7 & 8	Pittsburgh
	December 10	Philadelphia
	December 13	Kansas City
WALES	December 14	Boston
	June 23	Gregynog Festival

See the Concerts page on the Gimell website for more details



Photo: © Eric Richmond

A SNAPSHOT OF BARENBOIM'S PROMS APPEARANCES

September 1998:
Mahler's Fifth, with
the Chicago SOAugust 2009: Wagner,
with the West-Eastern
Divan OrchestraJuly 2012: Boulez and Beethoven,
again with the West-Eastern
Divan Orchestra

Last year at the Proms, Barenboim conducted all nine of Beethoven's symphonies alongside the music of Boulez. In the past he has also put side by side the Beethoven piano concertos (with himself as soloist) and music by Schoenberg. As we sit (or, in Barenboim's case, recline) in his conductor's room at the Schiller Theater, I put to him that, whereas many concert-goers might initially think of Schoenberg and Boulez as off-putting, his concerts pairing them with Beethoven are packed to the rafters. 'First of all,' he says, 'it gives me a tremendous amount of pleasure and encouragement to know that after so many years on the stage people still come to my concerts. I hope I never get to the point when they say, "Ah, but you should have heard him 10 years ago". I hope I will have the sense to stop before I get there. What gives me the most pleasure is that I have a feeling that people have given me their trust that I will not do anything without reason. If I put Beethoven together with Schoenberg, it's not just a gimmick. This gives me the incentive to try and do more of this kind of thing.'

Barenboim has also become a voice on non-musical matters, in particular the conflict between Israel and Palestine about which, as a Jew who grew up in Israel, he feels deeply. He has not been afraid of sparking controversy when he speaks, any more than he was in breaking the Israeli ban on Wagner by conducting his music in Jerusalem in July 2001. His arguments have been reasoned, and also sympathetic to those for whom Wagner has deeply distasteful connotations by reason of his anti-Semitism and his popularity among the Nazi hierarchy. 'I say what I say because I feel it,' Barenboim says. 'I don't have a sense of self-importance that my opinion must be heard.'

I speak only about things I feel very strongly about, when I feel I have something to say that I don't hear others say.'

Those of us of a certain age will remember that it was back in 1967 that Barenboim hit the headlines by flying to Israel during the Six Day War to play for Israeli troops. He went with the cellist Jacqueline du Pré, whom he married there on June 15. In those days, much of Barenboim's life was spent in the UK and, with such artists as du Pré, Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman, he was one of the bright young stars in the British musical firmament. He had a close relationship with

the English Chamber Orchestra that began in 1965 and lasted more than a decade. 'With the ECO,' he says, 'I was able to develop the technique of conducting and playing the piano simultaneously, as well as explore a huge amount of repertoire.' Three key figures stand out for him from that period. First, of course, there was du Pré. 'Quite apart from the personal side,' he says, 'I learned a lot from her, about string-playing, imagination and sound. I don't think I have ever met another musician with that degree of talent. She had an uncanny gift as if the music were inside her.' Then there was the pianist Clifford Curzon. 'I never studied with him, but I played with him a lot. That for me was one of the most wonderful musical experiences. I'll never forget his Schubert D major Sonata. It was as if the music were at the same time both aristocratic and plebeian. And he was an incredible fountain of knowledge, having studied both with Artur Schnabel and Wanda Landowska.' And then there was Sir John Barbirolli, who was, Barenboim says, 'like a father to me musically. He taught me so much.'

And now Barenboim is setting down another landmark by doing the complete *Ring* at the Proms. When he first went to the Berlin State Opera in 1992, Barenboim, as he describes in another of his books *A Life in Music*, found that the Staatskapelle orchestra 'was comparable to the most wonderful antique furniture, its beauty covered by layers of dust. I knew that the quality was very high and started to clean it up... I uncovered the intonation, a unity of attack, and ensemble-playing that had a unified purpose.' I remark on the wonderful mellow bloom that the orchestra produced the day before in *Götterdämmerung*. And Barenboim replies, 'It augurs rather well for the Proms, doesn't it?' **G**

● Daniel Barenboim conducts Wagner's *Ring* in Proms 14, 15, 18 and 20

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Alisa Weilerstein vc
Staatskapelle Berlin /

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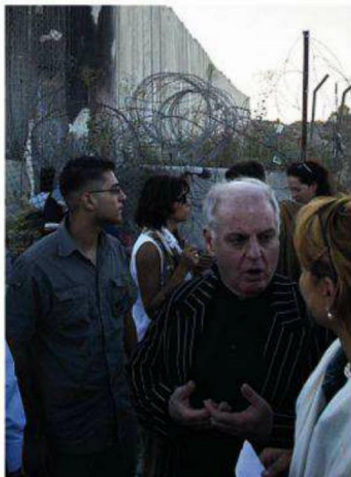
Pierre Boulez
DG (P) 477 9521 (1/12)

'Barenboim reaches out to a musical range undreamt of by lesser musicians,' wrote Bryce Morrison.



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A celebratory gala performance of Beethoven, Boulez and Bruckner.



Breaking barriers: Barenboim in Ramallah in 2005, ahead of a solidarity concert

Flying the flag for change

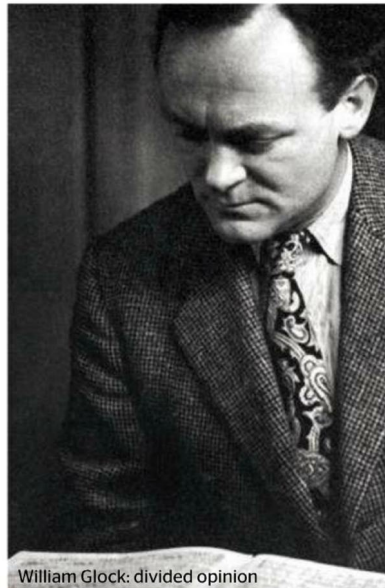
From a modest series of concerts in 1895 to a 21st-century festival that's the envy of the world, the Proms have come a long way – and William Glock deserves much of the credit, argues James Jolly

'I am going to run nightly concerts and train the public by easy stages. Popular at first, gradually raising the standard until I have created a public for classical and modern music.' (Robert Newman, 1895)

The impresario Robert Newman – with Henry Wood as his 'house conductor' – launched a series of concerts at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, and set in motion an annual festival which, 188 years later, is the envy of the world. The BBC Proms, formerly the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, offer Londoners – and even more important, radio listeners – two months of music-making of a standard and variety that isn't approached by even the most lavish and well-funded festivals elsewhere.

The Proms, though venerable as an event, assumed their current guise only as recently as 1960 when the much-abused William Glock took control of their running. Few men have been as posthumously derided for inflicting, as his detractors see it, a musical ideology on the British music-loving public with so little evidence actually marshalled for the argument: he's constantly judged and found guilty for what he didn't do, rather than what he did. Glock may have championed the modern and ignored the traditionalists, but a glance at his Proms seasons reveals someone with a real skill at programming that also had box-office appeal. And he managed to attract a new, younger public to his concerts.

Glock's first Proms season was 1960, a season that still employed just four orchestras (BBC Symphony, London Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Royal Opera) for the 49 concerts, yet which already showed signs of pushing back the boundaries of traditional programming. Take Friday nights, the evening that for many years had been devoted to the music of Beethoven (nowadays, only the Ninth Symphony remains an immovable fixture). Prom 6 of the 1960 season found the *Egmont* Overture, First Piano Concerto and Fifth Symphony supplemented by Roberto Gerhard's Violin Concerto and Debussy's *Nocturnes*; the following Friday the Prommers were treated more gently: *Fidelio* Overture, Fourth Piano Concerto and Seventh Symphony with Elgar's *Falstaff*. Prom 18, though, offered *The Creatures of Prometheus* Overture, Second Piano Concerto and



William Glock: divided opinion

'Glock is found guilty for what he didn't do, rather than what he did'

Sixth Symphony alongside Lutosławski's *Musique funèbre* and Debussy's *Jeux*, and the next week Britten's *Nocturne* and Berlioz's *Royal Hunt and Storm* joined the now-established overture-concerto-symphony menu. But my favourite, for adventurous programming, was Prom 42 – Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No 1, Third Piano Concerto and Second Symphony with Charles Ives's First Orchestral Set and Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. And as for the living composers on to whose music Glock turned the spotlight, that same season included Boris Blacher, Lennox Berkeley, Berio, Britten, Ian Hamilton, Alun Hoddinott, Shostakovich, Tippett, Hindemith, Humphrey Searle, Eugene Goossens, Thea Musgrave, Alan Rawsthorne and Milhaud.

Glock may have turned his back on composers like George Lloyd (and there have been enough letters about that in *Gramophone* down the years – for the record, his music makes two appearances this season, including one on the Last Night) but he extended the repertoire at both ends, as it were. His introduction of early and Baroque music found composers such as Cavalli, Monteverdi, Byrd, Dufay and Palestrina making their Proms debuts. But when it came to

performers, Glock inaugurated the now taken-for-granted appearances by, first, regional UK orchestras and ensembles and then by foreign ensembles. That, more than anything else, gave the Proms an international face, which now allows the world's great (and increasingly the excitingly up-and-coming) orchestras to perform alongside each other. And anything can happen – the Vienna Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra can seriously underwhelm while the Bergen Philharmonic or São Paulo Symphony can thrill.

The arrival in 1963 of the first non-British conductors since 1908 (Lady Wood apparently kicked up such a fuss in 1960 at the suggestion that Nino Sanzogno might appear that Glock held back) found the Proms taking on a truly international feel: Solti, Stokowski (admittedly British-born), Giulini and Varviso all appeared that season. And the Prommers, when asked, requested more, especially Karajan and Klemperer. The former obliged in 1973 (Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth with the BPO) but sadly Klemperer never appeared. And soon all the greats came: Giulini made five appearances, Solti 17, Bernstein

PROMS MILESTONES



1895

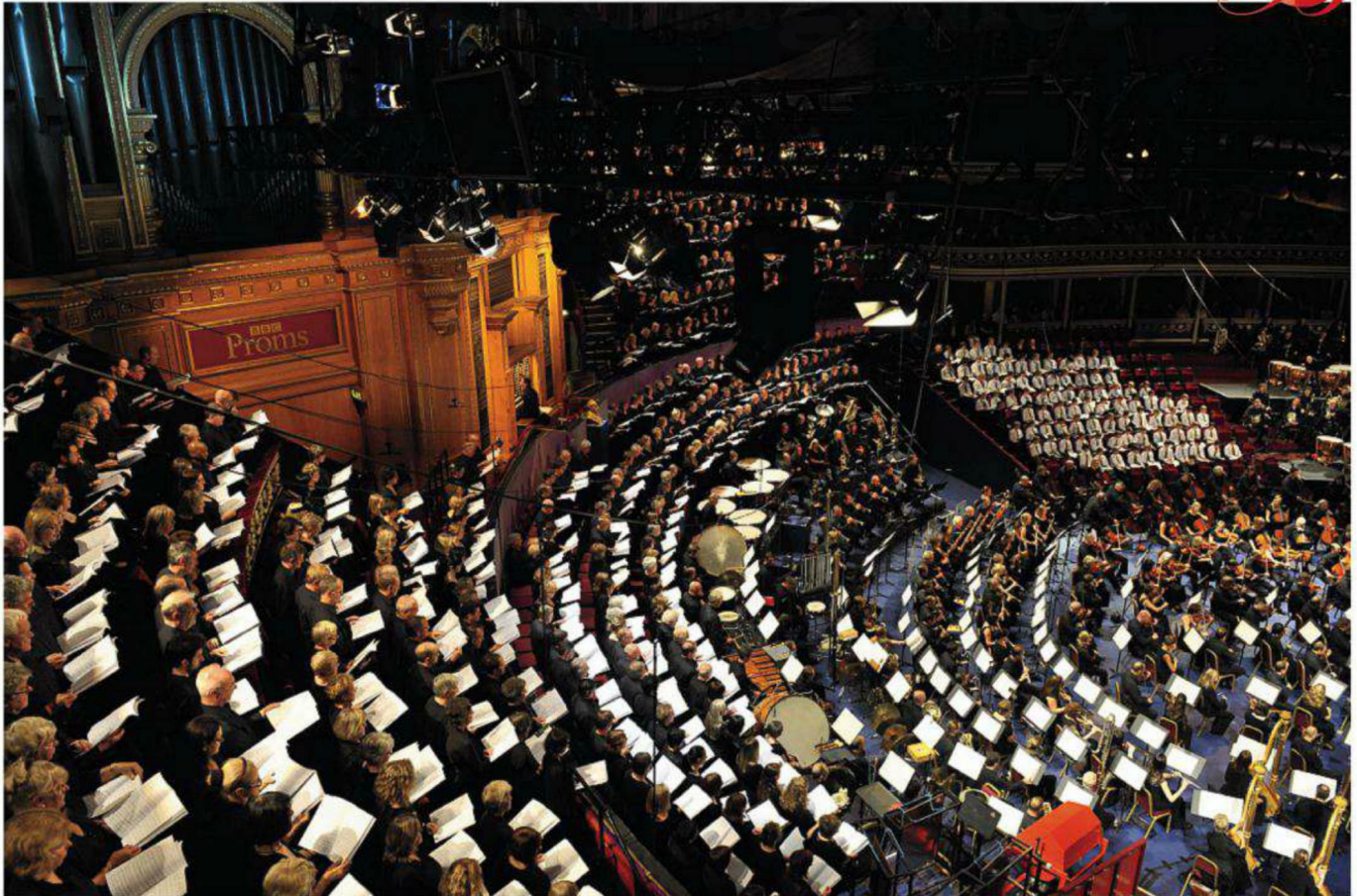
Impresario Robert Newman launches a series of concerts at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, and sets in motion the annual festival

1960

Glock leads his first Proms season, employing just four orchestras for the 49 concerts, yet already showing signs of progressive programming

1963

The arrival of the first non-British conductors since 1908 finds the Proms taking on a truly international feel



Pushing the boundaries: The Proms premiere of Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony*, performed by two orchestras, seven choruses, two children's choirs and four soloists

a couple (sadly not with the New York Philharmonic, though his concert of Mahler's Fifth with the Vienna Philharmonic in 1987 remains graven on my musical memory), Abbado has appeared a respectable 30 times since his 1967 Proms debut, Muti seven times, Chaïly 17, Levine three times and Rattle 66.

What the Proms do so well – given the vast size of the Royal Albert Hall (5500 capacity including standing places) – is the Big Work. Where other venues may be overwhelmed both by participants and volume, the place just eats up monster works like Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony or Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony*. But it can also be surprisingly intimate – a solo piano can connect with the audience with astounding effectiveness. And early and polyphonic repertoire seems to float up into the dome and bathe the audience in a glorious shower of voices.

So what does the 119th season hold in store in its 75 Royal Albert Hall concerts? There's the old – Bach from the Monteverdi Choir, and Gesualdo and Taverner from the Tallis Scholars. There's the new – 28 UK/European premieres of which 18 are also world premieres. There are the big events – most of Wagner's mature operas including a complete *Ring* and *Tristan* within the space of a single week (not for the faint-hearted). And there are the other anniversary composers –

Verdi, Britten, Bantock, Lutosławski (with Poulenc scandalously under-represented). And then there is the intimate – eight Monday lunchtime concerts of chamber music and five of chamber-orchestra-size repertoire on Saturday afternoons at Cadogan Hall.

And the evenings when musical partnerships will be at their most compelling? For myself, the Bamberg SO and Jonathan Nott – one of those British conductors whose career outside the UK is more visible that it is 'at home' – will be a must. It'll be good to sample Sir Antonio Pappano and the Santa Cecilia orchestra live, especially given their growing shelf of *Gramophone* Awards, and Mariss Jansons and the Bavarian RSO never disappoint. Plus Andris Nelsons (the name on the lips of everyone speculating about the next big appointment in Berlin) brings the CBSO to town. Class comes guaranteed from Elder and the Hallé, Jurowski and the LPO and, of course, the John Wilson Orchestra. But, for British music lovers, the 2013 Proms also inaugurates a relationship that will become part of the London musical scene, the BBC SO and its new boss, Sakari Oramo.

All that, and more, crammed into just eight weeks – it's almost enough to make you cancel your summer holiday! **G**

► For information on this year's Orchestras of the World and new music broadcasts on BBC Four, see page 43



1967

Abbado makes his Proms debut with Mendelssohn's Fourth and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*

1973

Karajan makes his Proms debut, conducting the BPO in Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies

1994

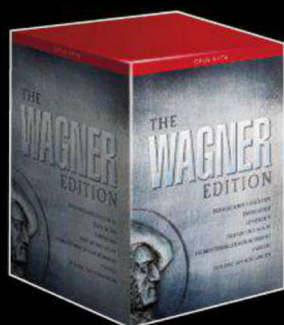
The 100th Proms season takes place – by now there are more than 70 main concerts annually

2011

First Proms performance of Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony*, calling on huge forces – see above!

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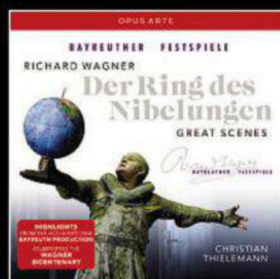


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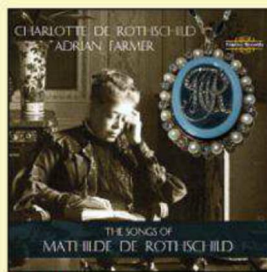
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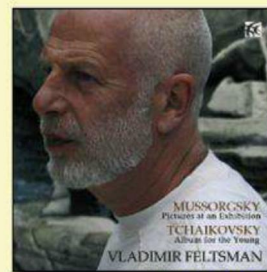


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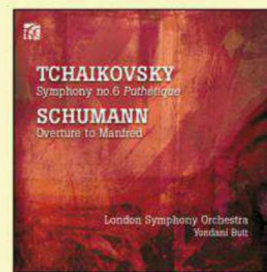
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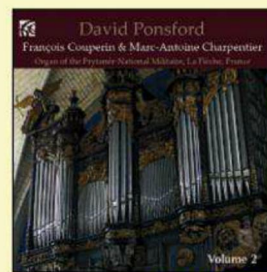
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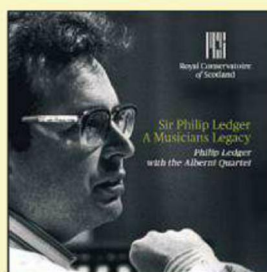
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Tippett's time has come

Oliver Soden looks forward to a Tippett celebration at the Proms and argues that he deserves to stand side by side with Britten, whose work he at times recalled and even foreshadowed

The similarity between the name of the haulage company Tibbett and Britten (prominent in the 1990s), and the names of the two leading British composers of the 20th century, did not escape people's notice. The programmers of this year's Proms season have decided to link Tippett and Britten once more in people's minds. How wise and illuminating to place the Britten centenary celebrations within a wider context, and to remind us of Britten's support and admiration for his friend, who, no less than Britten, gifted us one of the most important, diverse, beautiful, challenging and exhilarating oeuvres of the 20th century.

The Proms' focus comprises a comprehensive survey of Tippett's music for strings – Concerto for Double String Orchestra (1938-39), *Little Music for Strings* (1946), *Fantasia concertante on a Theme of Corelli* (1953), *Divertimento on Sellinger's Round* (1953-54) – set alongside a tantalising sliver of his oratorio *The Mask of Time* (1980-82), his Symphony No 2 (1956-57) and, joy of joys, a concert performance of his first opera, *The Midsummer Marriage* (1946-52).

This is a selection, in the main, from both Tippett's and the century's forties and fifties, but it includes many of Tippett's first mature works. After stretches of musical study, travel, Trotskyism and community music-making, Tippett had become music director at Morley College, where he remained until 1951. Reputation and performances came late, and with much support from Britten. The selection of his works at this summer's Proms will give us pieces that, at least in part, attempted both to portray and to heal the emotional and political turmoil of these years. Tippett refused to accept the conditions of his conscientious objectorship and, in 1943, was sent to prison, where he continued to compose, turned pages for a prison concert Britten and Peter Pears gave at his invitation, and took over the prison orchestra from Ivor Novello (who had been serving time for illegal use of petrol coupons for his Rolls-Royce).

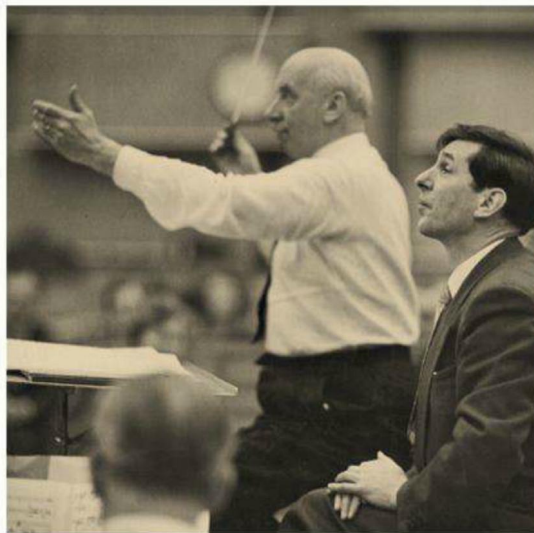
On Tippett's release, Britten soon helped organise the first performance of Tippett's oratorio *A Child of Our Time*. The premieres of the string orchestra works to be played this summer soon followed. This is a period in Tippett's music of seriously playful rhythmic and contrapuntal invention, recalling, even foreshadowing, much of Britten's work, yet recognisably a unique and exulting voice. The *Corelli Fantasia*, *Little Music for Strings* and Concerto for Double String Orchestra all remind us that nobody makes strings dance and sing like Tippett. Of the seven composers' contributions (including Britten's) to the team-effort *Variations on an Elizabethan Theme*, it is only Tippett's *Divertimento on Sellinger's Round* that continues

frequently to be played. Symphony No 2, with its four movements of (in Tippett's informal titles) 'joy, tenderness, gaiety, and fantasy', its pounding Vivaldi-inspired ground-bass heartbeat and the sensuous lapping sea of its slow movement, truly is joyful, tender and fantastical.

These are all qualities of *The Midsummer Marriage*. August 16 will mark the 16th Proms concert to feature music from this opera (the second act's Ritual Dances can be played independently) but not since 1977 has the Royal Albert Hall heard the whole thing. Seven years in the making, it is a work of continuous, energetic and verdant beauty. Its Covent Garden premiere did not receive quite the universal damnation that is reported, but certainly raised eyebrows, including those of its female lead, Joan Sutherland. Tippett's own

libretto plunged critics into what now seems inexplicable confusion. At the 1968 and 1970 Covent Garden revivals, audiences fell in love with Tippett's creation: something in between myth and dream, a concoction of Shakespeare, TS Eliot and *The Magic Flute* in which two troubled couples spend the shortest night of the year in an Ardenesque wood and, as in all magical comedies, find themselves and each other by sunrise.

Tippett's music, over a further four decades, spoke in many different voices, always unified by fierce compassion, complexity, and a quest to bring together the opposing forces of the world. I believe the later music, from operas such as *The Knot Garden* or *The Ice Break* through to the Third and Fourth Symphonies and the massive creation-oratorio *The Mask of Time* (from which we'll hear a five-minute fanfare), to be as inventive and



Michael Tippett, right, sits alongside Sir Adrian Boult as he rehearses the composer's Second Symphony in 1958

worthwhile as the earlier works, and look forward to a continued survey of a composer who hoped for, and looked for, and found, again and again, the beauty on the other side of turmoil. For now, the decision to remind us of our other great 20th-century British composer, particularly in a year that laments the death of Sir Colin Davis (who premiered and supported so many of Tippett's works), is absolutely right. I'm more excited than I can say. The haulage company wasn't called Tibbett or Britten, and (changing only one letter) how brilliant of the Proms to follow that example. 6

● Tippett's music features in Proms 26, 45, 51 and PSM 2, 4 and 5

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



Tippett *The Midsummer Marriage*
Soloists; Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden / Sir Colin Davis
Lyrita © 2 SRCDD217 (1/96)

PROMS 2013

FULL CONCERT LISTINGS

From epic Wagner with Barenboim to Dowland for tenor and lute, here is your complete, indispensable guide to the world's greatest classical music festival



Sakari Oramo opens the 2013 Proms with the BBC Symphony Chorus and Orchestra and BBC Proms Youth Choir

PROM 1 JULY 12

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC2 later this evening
Julian Anderson Harmony (world premiere) **Britten** Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes **Rachmaninov** Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini **Lutoslawski** Variations on a Theme by Paganini **Vaughan Williams** A Sea Symphony **Sally Matthews sop** **Roderick Williams bar** **Stephen Hough pf** BBC Proms Youth Choir; BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC SO / Sakari Oramo

PROM 2 JULY 13

7.30pm

Recorded for Broadcast on BBC1
Doctor Who Prom Programme includes: **Murray Gold** Music from the Doctor Who series **Bizet** Carmen Suite No 2 - Habanera **JS Bach** Toccata and Fugue in D minor **London Philharmonic Choir**; BBC NOW / Ben Foster

PROM 3 JULY 14

10.30am

Doctor Who Prom
For programme details, see Prom 2
BBC NOW / Ben Foster

PROM 4 JULY 14

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 21
Lully Le bourgeois gentilhomme - overture and dances **Rameau** Les Indes galantes - dances **Delibes** Coppélia - excerpts **Massenet** Le Cid - ballet music (excerpts) **Stravinsky** The Rite of Spring **Les Siècles / François-Xavier Roth**

PROM 5 JULY 15

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 18 (Mahler)
Helmut Lachenmann Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied **Mahler** Symphony No 5 **Arditti Quartet**; Bamberg SO / Jonathan Nott

PROM 6 JULY 16

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 19
David Matthews A Vision of the Sea (world premiere) **Rachmaninov** Piano Concerto No 2 **Nielsen** Symphony No 4, 'Inextinguishable' **Nobuyuki Tsujii pf** BBC Philharmonic / Juanjo Mena

PROM 7 10.15pm

Gospel Prom Pastor David Daniel
host Muiyiwa & Riversongz; London

Adventist Chorale / Ken Burton;
London Community Gospel Choir / Rebecca Thomas; **People's Christian Fellowship Choir / Ruth Waldron**

PROM 8 JULY 17

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 28
Britten Sinfonia da Requiem
Lutoslawski Cello Concerto **Thomas Adès** Totentanz (world premiere)
Paul Watkins vc **Christiane Stotijn mez** **Simon Keenlyside bar** BBC SO / Thomas Adès

PROM 9 JULY 18

7pm

Stenhammar Excelsior!
Szymanowski Symphony No 3, 'The Song of the Night' **R Strauss** An Alpine Symphony **Michael Weinius ten** BBC National Chorus of Wales; BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC NOW / Thomas Søndergård

PROM 10 JULY 19

6.30pm

Mozart Symphony No 35, 'Haffner'
Schumann Piano Concerto
Rachmaninov Symphony No 2
Jan Lisiecki pf

Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Rome /
Sir Antonio Pappano

PROM 11 10.15pm

Stockhausen Gesang der Jünglinge. Mittwoch aus 'Licht' - Welt-Parlament (concert performance) **Kathinka Pasveer sound projection**
Ex Cathedra / Jeffrey Skidmore

PROM 12 JULY 20

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 25
Verdi (arr C Hermann) String Quartet. Ave Maria (1880). Requiem - Libera me. Four Sacred Pieces **Maria Agresta sop** Santa Cecilia Orchestra and Chorus / Sir Antonio Pappano

PROM 13 JULY 21

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 July 26
Sean Shepherd Magiya **Tchaikovsky** Violin Concerto **Shostakovich** Symphony No 10 **Joshua Bell vn** **National Youth Orchestra of USA / Valery Gergiev**

PROM 14 JULY 22

7pm

Wagner Das Rheingold
Cast includes: **Iain Paterson**
Wotan Ekaterina Gubanova
Fricka Staatskapelle Berlin / Daniel Barenboim

PROM 15 JULY 23

5pm

Wagner Die Walküre
Cast includes: **Bryn Terfel** **Wotan** Nina Stemme **Brünnhilde** Staatskapelle Berlin / Daniel Barenboim

PROM 16 JULY 24

7.30pm

Elgar Falstaff **Bantock** Sapphic Poem **Walton** Henry V - Touch her soft lips and part; Death of Falstaff
Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4
Raphael Wallfisch vc BBC NOW / Jac van Steen

PROM 17 JULY 25

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 2
John McCabe Joybox (world premiere) **Beethoven** Symphony No 7 **Falla** The Three-Cornered Hat
Ravel Boléro **Clara Mouriz mez** BBC Philharmonic / Juanjo Mena

PROM 18 JULY 26

5pm

Wagner Siegfried (concert performance) Cast includes: **Lance Ryan** **Siegfried** Nina Stemme **Brünnhilde** Staatskapelle Berlin / Daniel Barenboim

PROM 19 JULY 27

5pm

Broadcast on BBC4 September 1

Wagner *Tristan and Isolde*
Cast includes: Peter Seiffert Tristan
Violeta Urmana *Isolde* **Kwangchul**
Youn King Mark **Gerd Grochowski**
Gunther **BBC Singers**; **BBC Symphony**
Chorus; **BBC SO** / **Semyon Bychkov**

PROM 20 JULY 28

4.30pm

Wagner *Götterdämmerung*
Cast includes: Nina Stemme
Brünnhilde **Ian Storey** **Siegfried**
Mikhail Petrenko *Hagen*
Chorus of ROH; **Staatskapelle Berlin** /
Daniel Barenboim

PROM 21 JULY 29

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 4
Colin Matthews *Turning Point*
Prokofiev *Violin Concerto No 2*
Shostakovich *Symphony No 11, 'The*
Year 1905' **Daniel Hope** *vn*
BBC NOW / **Thomas Søndergård**

PROM 22 10.15pm

Naturally 7

PROM 23 JULY 30

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 1
Mozart *Masonic Funeral Music, K477*
Schumann *Symphony No 2*
Mozart *Piano Concerto No 25*
Sibelius *Symphony No 7*
Paul Lewis *pf*
Mahler *Chamber Orchestra* /
Daniel Harding

PROM 24 JULY 31

7pm

Bantock *Pierrot of the Minute* **Elgar**
Nursery Suite **Arnold** *Concerto for two*
pianos (three hands) **Walton** *Crown*
Imperial **Coates** *The Three Elizabeths*
Arnold *English Dances, Set 1, Op 27*
Gordon Langford *Medley 'Say it with*
Music' **Noriko Ogawa**; **Kathryn Stott**
pfs **BBC Concert Orchestra** /
Barry Wordsworth

PROM 25 10.15pm

Zappa *The Adventures of Greggery*
Peccary **Nancarrow** (arr YE
Mikhashoff) *Study for Player Piano No 7*
Philip Glass *Symphony No 10* **Aurora**
Orchestra / **Nicholas Collon**

PROM 26 AUGUST 1

7.30pm

Henze *Barcarola* **Stravinsky** *Concerto*
for piano and wind instruments.
Movements **Tippett** *Symphony No 2*
Peter Serkin *pf* **BBC SO** /
Oliver Knussen

PROM 27 AUGUST 2

7.30pm

Naresh Sohal *The Cosmic Dance*
(world premiere) **Rachmaninov**
Piano Concerto No 3 **Tchaikovsky**
Symphony No 5 **Nikolai Lugansky** *pf*
RSNO / **Peter Oundjian**

PROM 28 AUGUST 3

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 9
J Strauss II *By the Beautiful Blue*
Danube - waltz **James MacMillan**
Violin Concerto **Beethoven** *Overture*
'Coriolan' *Symphony No 5* **Vadim**
Repin *vn* **BBC Scottish SO** /
Donald Runnicles

PROM 29 AUGUST 4

6pm

Wagner *Tannhäuser* (concert
performance) *Cast includes: Robert*
Dean Smith *Tannhäuser* **Heidi Melton**
Elisabeth *Chorus of the Deutsche*
Oper Berlin; **BBC Scottish SO** /
Donald Runnicles

PROM 30 AUGUST 5

7.30pm

Borodin *Prince Igor - overture*;
Polovtsian Dances **Prokofiev**
Piano Concerto No 2 **Edward Cowie**
Earth Music 1 - The Great Barrier Reef
(world premiere) **Tchaikovsky**
Symphony No 2, 'Little Russian'
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet *pf* **BBC**
Philharmonic / **Gianandrea Noseda**

PROM 31 AUGUST 6

7.30pm

Walton *March 'Orb and Sceptre'*
Rubbra *Ode to the Queen* **Bruch**
Violin Concerto No 1 **Korngold**
Symphony **Vilde Frang** *vn* **Susan**
Bickley *mez* **BBC Philharmonic** /
John Storgårds

PROM 32 AUGUST 7

7.30pm

Lutosławski *Symphonic Variations.*
Piano Concerto **Holst** *Egdon Heath.*
The Planets **Louis Lortie** *pf* **BBC**
Symphony Chorus; **BBC SO** /
Edward Gardner

PROM 33 AUGUST 8

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 at 7.30
Beethoven *Piano Concerto No 4*
Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*
Mitsuko Uchida *pf* **Bavarian Radio SO**
/ **Mariss Jansons**

PROM 34 10.15pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 23



Vilde Frang performs Bruch with the BBC Philharmonic on August 6

Vivaldi *The Four Seasons* **Nigel**
Kennedy *vn/dir* *Palestine Strings*;
Members of the Orchestra of Life

PROM 35 AUGUST 9

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 15
Mahler *Symphony No 2* **Genia**
Kühmeier *sop* **Anna Larsson** *mez*
Bavarian Radio Symphony Choir;
Bavarian Radio SO / **Mariss Jansons**

PROM 36 10pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 16

JS Bach *Easter Oratorio.* *Ascension*
Oratorio **Hannah Morrison** *sop*
Meg Bragle *mez* **Nicholas Mulroy** *ten*
Peter Harvey *bass* **Monteverdi Choir**;
English Baroque Soloists / **Sir John**
Eliot Gardiner

PROM 37 AUGUST 10

8pm

Broadcast on BBC3 August 10
Urban Classic Prom
Fazer; **Laura Mvula**; **Maverick Sabre**
singers **BBC SO** / **Jules Buckley**

PROM 38 AUGUST 11

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 September 6
Vaughan Williams *Toward the*
Unknown Region **Mark-Anthony**
Turnage *Frieze* (world premiere)
Beethoven *Symphony No 9, 'Choral'*
Lisa Milne *sop* **Jennifer Johnston** *mez*
Andrew Kennedy *ten* **Gerald Finley**
bar **Codetta**; **Irish Youth Chamber**
Choir; **National Youth Choir of Great**
Britain; **National Youth Orchestra of**
Great Britain / **Vasily Petrenko**

PROM 39 AUGUST 12

7pm

Indra **Nishat Khan** *The Gate of*
the Moon (world premiere) **Vaughan**

Williams *A London Symphony*
Nishat Khan *sitar* **BBC NOW** /
David Atherton

PROM 40 10.15pm

6 Music Prom

Steve Lamacq; **Tom Service**
presenters **Laura Marling**;
Cerys Matthews *singers*
Anna Stéphany *mez* **The**
Stranglers; **London Sinfonietta**

PROM 41 AUGUST 13

7.30pm

Borodin *Symphony No 2*
Glazunov *Piano Concerto No 2*
Sofia Gubaidulina *The Rider on*
the White Horse **Mussorgsky**
(orch Ravel) *Pictures at an Exhibition*
Daniil Trifonov *pf* **LSO** /
Valery Gergiev

PROM 42 AUGUST 14

7pm

Janáček *Sinfonietta* **Beethoven**
Piano Concerto No 3 **Tchaikovsky**
Symphony No 3, 'Polish'
Sunwook Kim *pf* **Bournemouth SO** /
Kirill Karabits

PROM 43 10.15pm

Taverner *Kyrie 'Leroy.'* *Missa Gloria*
tibi Trinitas **Gesualdo** *Ave, dulcissima*
Maria. Ave, regina caelorum. Maria,
mater gratiae **Tallis** *Scholars* /
Peter Phillips

PROM 44 AUGUST 15

7.30pm

Stravinsky *Fireworks* **Krzysztof**
Penderecki *Concerto grosso*
Debussy *La mer* **Ravel** *Daphnis*
and Chloe - Suite No 2 **Leonard**
Elschenbroich *vc* **Daniel Müller-**
Schott *vc* **Arto Noras** *vc* **RPO** /
Charles Dutoit

PROMS ON THE AIRWAVES

Every programme is broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and many are broadcast internationally. Katie Derham presents a new six-part Proms highlights series on BBC Two, while BBC Four features themed Proms coverage - Orchestras of the World on Thursdays, high-profile Proms on Fridays, and 20th- and 21st-century works on Sundays. For the first time, PCM concerts are filmed for the BBC website and future broadcast on BBC Four. All Proms broadcast on BBC radio and television are available to listen to or watch on demand via the BBC iPlayer for seven days. For details of Proms television broadcasts, visit bbc.co.uk/proms/whats-on/2013/categories/proms-on-tv

PROM 45 **AUGUST 16**

6.30pm

Tippett The Midsummer Marriage (concert performance) *Cast includes: Paul Groves Mark Erin Wall Jenifer Peter Sidhom King Fisher BBC Singers; BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC SO / Sir Andrew Davis*

PROM 46 **AUGUST 17**

3pm

Dvořák Symphony No 8 **Verdi** Otello – Willow Song; Ave Maria **Tchaikovsky** Eugene Onegin – Polonaise; Letter Scene **J Strauss II** Emperor Waltz. Thunder and Lightning – polka **Kristine Opolais** sop CBSO / Andris Nelsons

PROM 47 **7.30pm**

Brahms Tragic Overture. A German Requiem **Schumann** Symphony No 4 **Rachel Harnisch** sop Henk Neven bar OAE & Choir / Marin Alsop

PROM 48 **AUGUST 18**

7.30pm

Ravel Rapsodie espagnole **Matthias Pintscher** Chute d'étoiles **Stravinsky** The Firebird **Tine Thing Helseth**; **Marco Blaauw** tpts BBC Scottish SO / Matthias Pintscher

PROM 49 **AUGUST 19**

7pm

Berlioz Overture 'King Lear' **Mendelssohn** Piano Concerto No 1 **JS Bach** (orch G Benjamin) The Art of Fugue – Canon and Fugue **Beethoven** Symphony No 3, 'Eroica' **Stephen Hough** pf SCO / Robin Ticciati

PROM 50 **10.15pm**

John White Chord-Breaking Machine **Gerald Barry** No other people **Frederic Rzewski** Piano Concerto (world premiere) **Feldman** Coptic Light **Frederic Rzewski** pf BBC Scottish SO / Ilan Volkov

PROM 51 **AUGUST 20**

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 25
Tippett The Mask of Time – Fanfare No 5. Concerto for Double String Orchestra **Britten** Les illuminations **Sibelius** Symphony No 2 **Ian Bostridge** ten LSO / Daniel Harding

PROM 52 **AUGUST 21**

7.30pm

Param Vir Cave of Luminous Mind (world premiere) **Sibelius** Violin Concerto **Bantock** Celtic Symphony **Elgar** 'Enigma' Variations **Lisa Batilashvili** vn BBC SO / Sakari Oramo

PROM 53 **AUGUST 22**

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 at 7.30pm
Tchaikovsky Fantasy-Overture 'Romeo and Juliet' **Wagner** Wesendonck-Lieder **Prokofiev**

Symphony No 5 **Anna Caterina**

Antonacci sop Rotterdam PO / **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**

PROM 54 **10pm**

World Routes Prom Fidan Hajiyeva; **Gochaq Askarov** vocalists Bassekou Kouyaté & Ngoni Ba; Tinariwen

PROM 55 **AUGUST 23**

7.30pm

Lutoslawski Concerto for Orchestra **Shostakovich** Piano Concerto No 2. Symphony No 6 **A Panufnik** Tragic Overture. Lullaby **Alexander Melnikov** pf Warsaw PO / Antoni Wit

PROM 56 **AUGUST 24**

7.30pm

Broadcast on BBC4 August 29
Wagner Rienzi – overture **Ravel** Piano Concerto in G **Shostakovich** Symphony No 5 **Jean-Yves Thibaudet** pf Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester / Philippe Jordan

PROM 57 **AUGUST 25**

4.30pm

Wagner Parsifal (concert performance) *Cast includes: Lars Cleveman Parsifal Katarina Dalayman Kundry Trinity Boys Choir; Hallé Youth Choir; Hallé / Sir Mark Elder*

PROM 58 **AUGUST 26**

4.30pm

Light Organ Prom Programme includes: **Coates** March 'Sound and Vision' **Sullivan** (arr R Hills) Mikado Memories **Ireland** Miniature Suite – Villanella **Mayerl** Four Aces Suite – Ace of Hearts **German** Three Dances from Nell Gwyn **Waller** A Handful of Keys **Richard Hills** org

PROM 59 **7.30pm**

Broadcast on BBC4 on August 30
Hollywood Rhapsody Prom John Wilson Orchestra / John Wilson

PROM 60 **AUGUST 27**

7pm

Britten Billy Budd (semi-staged) *Cast includes: Jacques Imbrailo Billy Budd Mark Padmore Captain Vere Glyndebourne Festival Opera; LPO / Sir Andrew Davis*

PROM 61 **AUGUST 28**

7pm

Stravinsky Scherzo à la russe. Ave Maria. Pater noster. Petrushka (1947 version) **Brahms** Violin Concerto **Charlotte Seither** Language of Leaving (world premiere) **Frank Peter Zimmermann** vn BBC Singers; BBC SO / Josep Pons

PROM 62 **10.15pm**

A Celebration of Charlie Parker Programme includes: **Django Bates** The Study of Touch **Beloved** (Django



Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts the Rotterdam Philharmonic on August 22

Bates pf **Petter Eldh** db **Peter Bruun** drums) **Norrbotten Big Band**; **Ashley Slater** vocalist

PROM 63 **AUGUST 29**

7.30pm

Mozart Der Schauspieldirektor – overture **Peter Eötvös** DoReMi **Bruckner** Symphony No 7 **Midori** vn **Philharmonia Orchestra** / **Esa-Pekka Salonen**

PROM 64 **AUGUST 30**

7.30pm

Bantock The Witch of Atlas **Prokofiev** Piano Concerto No 3 **Sibelius** Pohjola's Daughter **R Strauss** Also sprach Zarathustra **Anika Vavic** pf London PO / **Vladimir Jurowski**

PROM 65 **AUGUST 31**

7.30pm

Recorded for broadcast on BBC4
Film Music Prom Programme includes: **Addinsell** Warsaw Concerto (from 'Dangerous Moonlight') **Alwyn** The True Glory – March **Bennett** Lady Caroline Lamb – suite **Lucas** Ice Cold in Alex – March **Walton** Battle of Britain – excerpts **Valentina Lisitsa** pf **Lawrence Power** va BBC CO / **Keith Lockhart**

PROM 66 **SEPTEMBER 1**

4pm

Family Matinee: The Big Proms **Bear Hunt** *Programme includes music by: Mussorgsky, Grieg & Stravinsky* **Michael Rosen** storyteller **Tony Ross** illustrator **In Harmony** Liverpool;

Liverpool Philharmonic; Children's Choirs; RLPO / Matthew Coorey

PROM 67 **7.30pm**

Recorded for broadcast on BBC4
Arvo Pärt Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten **Britten** Violin Concerto **Berlioz** Overture 'Le corsaire' **Saint-Saëns** Symphony No 3, 'Organ' **Janine Jansen** vn **Thierry Escaich** org **Orchestre de Paris / Paavo Järvi**

PROM 68 **SEPTEMBER 2**

7.30pm

Tchaikovsky Symphony No 1, 'Winter Daydreams' **Szymanowski** Violin Concerto No 1 **Rachmaninov** Symphonic Dances **Baiba Skride** vn **Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra** / **Vasily Petrenko**

PROM 69 **SEPTEMBER 3**

7pm

Beethoven Piano Concerto No 2 **Bruckner** Symphony No 4, 'Romantic' **Christian Ihle Hadland** pf Oslo **Philharmonic Orchestra** / **Vasily Petrenko**

PROM 70 **10pm**

Britten A Boy was Born **Lloyd** Requiem **Iestyn Davies** countertenor **Greg Morris** org **Chorists of the Temple Church; BBC Singers** / **David Hill**

PROM 71 **SEPTEMBER 4**

7.30pm

Górecki Symphony No 3, 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs' **Vaughan**



Marin Alsop on the Last Night...

The first female conductor to lead the famous festivities

The Proms has a very special and unique atmosphere. I had the wonderful experience of making my debut (and return) at the Proms with the Bournemouth Symphony when I was principal conductor and was really moved by the enthusiasm of the audiences and the sense of occasion we all shared. Having the opportunity to bring the São Paulo Symphony last summer was very exciting. The public response, including waving Brazilian flags, was fantastic and my musicians were over the moon.

Conducting the Last Night of the Proms is a real honour. I have loved working in the UK from the very first moment I appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra in the '90s. British musicians have an incredible work ethic and genuine passion for what they do – and all with a great sense of humour! This is, for me, an ideal environment. My experience with British audiences has been warm and enthusiastic and the UK has always felt like a second home.

I worked with Roger Wright to create a varied programme that would bring our two worlds together, paying tribute to my teacher and mentor Leonard Bernstein while drawing upon the richness of British music through the works of Britten and Vaughan Williams. It is also an important anniversary year for Verdi and Wagner, so there is much to celebrate! The challenge I encountered was having to pare down the selections. My Last Night programme could have easily lasted four hours, but don't worry: I think we managed to find a good balance!

The programme also includes a world premiere – *Masquerade* by Anna Clyne. I think Anna is the real deal. I have performed many of her works and invited her repeatedly to attend my Cabrillo Festival of contemporary music. We have solo contributions from mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato and violinist Nigel Kennedy, too. I feel so fortunate to be collaborating with these two exceptional, unique, high-voltage artists. The word that comes to my mind for both of them is: dynamite!

Williams (orch A Payne) Four Last Songs (world premiere) **Tchaikovsky** Symphony No 6, 'Pathétique' **Ruby Hughes** *sop* **Jennifer Johnston** *mez* **BBC SO** / **Osmo Vänskä**

PROM 72 SEPTEMBER 5

7pm

Broadcast on BBC4 at 7.30pm

Verdi La forza del destino – overture. Attila – 'O dolore! ed io vivea'.

I vespri siciliani – 'À toi que j'ai chérie'. La traviata – Prelude (Act 1). Simon Boccanegra – 'O inferno!...Sento avvampar nell'anima'. Aida – Triumphal March (Act 2). Luisa Miller – 'O! fede negar potessi...Quando le sere al placido'. Rigoletto – 'La donna è mobile'. **Tchaikovsky** Manfred **Joseph Calleja** *ten* **Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi** / **Xian Zhang**

PROM 73 10.15pm

Schubert Piano Sonata, D958. Piano Sonata, D812 'Grand Duo' **Imogen Cooper**; **Paul Lewis** *pfs*

PROM 74 SEPTEMBER 6

7.30pm

JS Bach (arr A Guilman) Cantata 'Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir', BWV 29 – Sinfonia **JS Bach** Chorale Prelude 'Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr', BWV 662. Chorale Prelude 'Komm, Gott Schöpfer, heiliger Geist', BWV 667. Chorale Prelude 'Vor deinem Thron tret' ich hiermit', BWV 668. Prelude and Fugue, BWV 543 **Bruckner** Symphony No 8 (1890 version, ed Nowak) **Klaus Sonnleitner** *org* **Vienna PO** / **Lorin Maazel**

PROM 75 SEPTEMBER 7

7.30pm

Broadcast Live on BBC1 and BBC2

Anna Clyne Masquerade (world premiere) **Wagner** The Mastersingers of Nuremberg – overture **Bernstein** Chichester Psalms. Candide – overture; 'Make our Garden Grow' **Vaughan Williams** The Lark Ascending **Britten** The Building of the House **Massenet** Chérubin – 'Je suis gris! je suis ivre!' **Handel** Xerxes – 'Frondi tenere e belle...Ombra mai fù' **Rossini** La donna del lago – 'Tanti affetti in tal momento!' **Verdi** Nabucco – 'Va, pensiero' (Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves) **Arlen** Over the Rainbow **Monti** Csárdás **Trad** Londonderry Air (Danny Boy) **Rodgers** Carousel – 'You'll never walk alone' **Bantock** Sea Reivers **Lloyd** HMS Trinidad March **Arne** Rule, Britannia! **Elgar** Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 ('Land of Hope and Glory') **Parry** (orch Elgar) Jerusalem **The National Anthem** (arr Britten) **Joyce DiDonato** *mez* **Nigel Kennedy** *vn* **BBC Symphony Chorus**; **BBC Symphony Orchestra** / **Marin Alsop**

Chamber Music at Cadogan Hall

PCM 1 JULY 16

1pm

Ravel Violin Sonata **Mozart** Violin Sonata, K379 **Lutoslawski** Partita **Vilde Frang** *vn* **Michail Lifits** *pf*

PCM 2 JULY 22

1pm

Anon Chwała tobie, Gospodzinie. Cracovia civitas **Wanning** Dixit angelus ad Petrum. Et valde mane **Zieleński** Mihi autem nimis **Demantius** Neue liebliche Intraden und fröhen. Polnischen Tänzten – Intrada; Chorea polonica; Gaillarde **Marenzio** Lamentabatur Jacob. Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi **Klabon** Tryumfuji, wierny poddany **Huelgas Ensemble** / **Paul Van Nevel**

PCM 3 JULY 29

1pm

Britten Cantic I 'My beloved is mine'. A Charm of Lullabies. Night Piece. Songs from the Chinese. Cantic II 'Abraham and Isaac'. Master Kilby **Christianne Stotijn** *mez* **James Gilchrist** *ten* **Christoph Denoth** *gtr* **Imogen Cooper** *pf*

PCM 4 AUGUST 5

1pm

Grieg Holberg Suite – Praeludium. Lyric Pieces – Grandmother's Minuet. 19 Norwegian Folk Songs – Gjendine's Lullaby. Lyric Pieces – March of the Dwarfs. **Diana Burrell** Blaze (world premiere) **Weill** The Threepenny Opera – suite **Piazzolla** Oblivion **Bizet** Carmen – Suite No 2 **tenThing**

PCM 5 AUGUST 12

1pm

Gustav Holst Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda **Imogen Holst** Halo, my fancy, whither wilt thou go? **Sir Harrison Birtwistle** The Moth Requiem **BBC Singers**; **Nash Ensemble** / **Nicholas Kok**

PCM 6 AUGUST 19

1pm

Poulenc Sextet **Imogen Holst** Phantasy Quartet **Warlock** The Curlew **Couperin** (arr T Adès) Les baricades mystérieuses **Robin Tritschler** *ten* **London Conchord Ensemble**

PCM 7 AUGUST 26

1pm

Maconchy String Quartet No 3 **Brahms** Piano Quintet **Signum Quartet**; **Christian Ihle Hadland** *pf*

PCM 8 SEPTEMBER 2

1pm

Dowland The King of Denmark's Galliard. Can she excuse my wrongs (The Earl of Essex's Galliard). Flow,

my tears (Lachrimae antiquae).

My thoughts are winged with hopes (Sir John Souch's Galliard). Farewell Fancy (Chromatic fantasia). Sorrow, stay, lend true repentant tears. Come again, sweet love doth now invite. Mr John Langton's Pavan. I saw my lady weep. Lachrimae amantis. If my complaints could passions move (Captain Digorie Piper's Galliard). Lachrimae tristes. In darkness let me dwell. Shall I strive with words to move (Sir Henry Noel's Galliard)

Fretwork; **Ian Bostridge** *ten*

Elizabeth Kenny *lute*

Saturday Matinees at Cadogan Hall

PSM 1 JULY 20

3pm

Corelli Concerto grosso, Op 6 No 1. Concerto grosso, Op 6 No 12 **Handel** Cantata 'Pensieri notturni di Filli'. Cantata 'Tra le fiamme' **Valentini** Concerto grosso for four violins, Op 7 No 1 **Sophie Bevan** *sop* **Academy of Ancient Music** / **Richard Egarr** *hpd*

PSM 2 AUGUST 3

3pm

Britten Prelude and Fugue. Phaedra **Holst** St Paul's Suite **L Berkeley** Four Poems of St Teresa of Avila **Tippett** Fantasia concertante on a Theme of Corelli **Sarah Connolly** *mez* **Britten Sinfonia** / **Sian Edwards**

PSM 3 AUGUST 10

3pm

Britten Young Apollo. Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge **L Berkeley** Serenade for strings **Shostakovich** Concerto for piano, trumpet and strings **Rainier** Movement for strings (world premiere) **Alison Balsom** *tpt* **Camerata Ireland** / **Barry Douglas** *pf*

PSM 4 AUGUST 24

3pm

Purcell (arr Britten) Chacony **Lutoslawski** Paroles tissées **L Berkeley**, **Britten**, **Oldham**, **Searle**, **Tippett**, **Walton** Variations on an Elizabethan Theme (Selling's Round) with new variations by **Tansy Davies** and **John Woolrich** (world premiere) **Britten** Serenade for tenor, horn and strings **Ben Johnson** *ten* **Richard Watkins** *hn* **English Chamber Orchestra** / **Paul Watkins**

PSM 5 AUGUST 31

3pm

Britten Simple Symphony. Elegy for strings (world premiere). Lachrymae **Tippett** Little Music for strings **Walton** Sonata for strings **Catherine Bullock** *va* **Camerata Nordica** / **Terje Tønnesen** *vn*

Master of the Queen's choirbook

For the Golden Jubilee, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies curated a new book of anthems, 11 of which were commissions. As these are finally recorded, **Caroline Gill** surveys a legacy that will last for generations

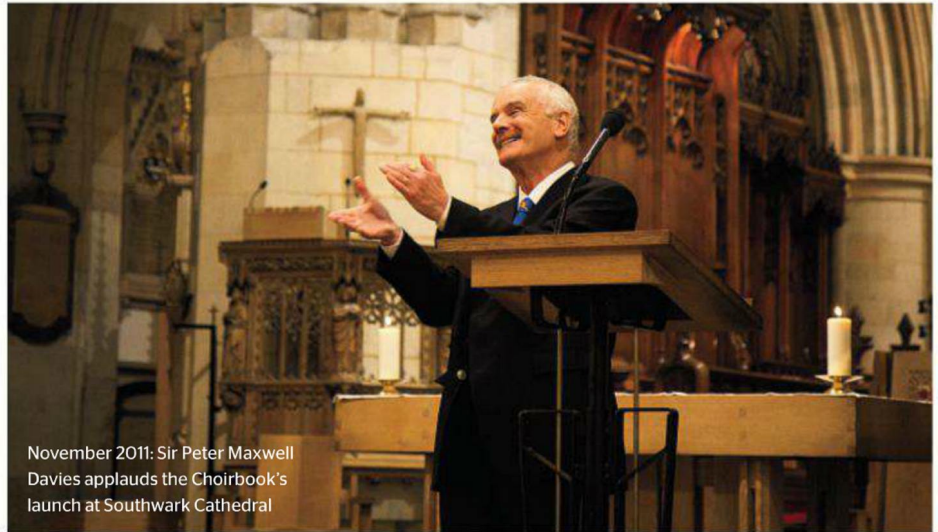
It was originally a suggestion by Robert Ponsonby, the BBC's sometimes-controversial controller of music in the 1970s and '80s: the Master of the Queen's Music should put together a proper 'choirbook' of English choral music in celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies jumped on the idea with enormous enthusiasm and, over the course of the nine years leading up to the Jubilee year of 2012, the project was developed by an advisory board that included revered church musicians such as Stephen Cleobury and Christopher Robinson (as well as Maxwell Davies himself). Although the 'golden' number 60 was at one point mooted, 44 anthems were finally agreed upon, 11 of which were commissioned by the Choirbook Trust – formed as a result of Ponsonby and Maxwell Davies's grand idea – and 80 cathedral and choral foundations sang the anthems over the course of the year. Many were broadcast as part of the *Choral Evensong* series on BBC Radio 3, with each institution given a set of choirbooks in the hope that the music would enter the regular repertoire and create a legacy that would last for generations.

Observing the recording sessions, it is easy to see how this could be: the BBC Singers are heavily populated by members brought up in the choral music tradition that has not only inspired these pieces but spawned the ethos in which they were trained. They all look as comfortable singing in front of Cleobury as adults as they would have done as teenage choral scholars in Cambridge, at Evensong in their college chapel, and in the session's atmosphere of humour and familiarity there is a definite sense that the music they are recording comes particularly easily to them.

Choral Evensong may be a tradition that has been providing comfort to many people for hundreds of years but Maxwell Davies is quick to point out that this doesn't mean it is the reserve of purely traditional music. Speaking of his experience as a student in Manchester, he says: 'I realised Evensong wasn't just music by Palestrina and Byrd – contemporary composers were actively involved.'

It's still strange, though, to consider the fact that the *Choirbook for the Queen's* only comparable shelf-mate was compiled more than 500 years ago. It is inherent in the title: the whole project immediately

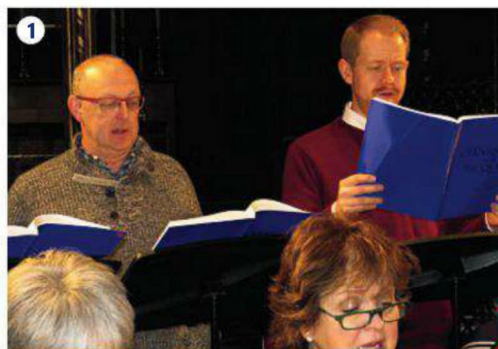


November 2011: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies applauds the Choirbook's launch at Southwark Cathedral

sets up a resonance with the Eton Choirbook, a collection of sacred (exclusively Marian, in fact) texts accumulated over the 15 years or so from the very end of the 15th century to the first five years of the 16th. And just as the Eton Choirbook was a snapshot, liturgically speaking, of what the leading composers of the day were doing, what they were writing and what was happening at the time, so the committee for the 21st-century *Choirbook* sought to do the same, inviting contributions from a range of composers that would showcase the diversity of music being written today. In doing that, though, a strikingly different image of how music functions in society now, in comparison to Tudor society, was thrown up.

'I think that what we're looking at in the current climate is a profusion of all styles,' observes Cleobury. 'You're seeing in the younger generation an ability to be open to a much wider variety.'

Recording the 11 commissions: St Paul's, Knightsbridge, January 2013



When I look at the students I'm teaching at King's, they're much more broad-ranging in the types of music they're open to than I was.' He looks thoughtful when he says this, before laughing and adding, 'but that may just say something about me'.

Cleobury's choir at King's College, Cambridge, was one of the first to premiere a *Choirbook* piece over the course of 2012. They performed *Cities and thrones and powers* by Alexander Goehr, one of the more straightforwardly beautiful pieces in the collection (and unique in its piano accompaniment). It was a clever pairing – a melodic piece for amenable acoustics like those of King's, but with some unexpected and tricky intervals, both in the melody and between the parts – and one that will no doubt take on a significance for future generations of scholars for its musical interest as well as its historical context. That is not to say it is accurate to speculate that those composers commissioned to write new works were held up as significant in comparison to others represented there.

'You can't draw that conclusion, no,' says Cleobury. 'I also wouldn't like to feel that we were filling in gaps. It was more a case that we wanted to have bodies of work from, for example, Sir John Tavener and Giles Swayne, but also from Diana Burrell, who didn't have anything from the last 10 years that quite fitted what we were after.'

So if someone were to pick up the *Choirbook for the Queen* 200 years from now, what would the major differences be between it and its companion pillar, the Eton Choirbook? The latter falls roughly into three sections – music written in the style of the early Renaissance, which was falling out of practice; music written in the standard polyphonic style that was in most common use at the time; and some quite revolutionary counterpoint and harmony from the most radical composers of the day, such as Cornysh and Fayrfax, who started to make their music sound altogether more modern and cosmopolitan. Yet as much as this suggests a survey of diverse musical styles, to most ears today the music would sound broadly similar across the whole collection. Not so in its modern-day companion.



Below: The Queen and the Duchess of Cambridge in Leicester in March 2012 for Andrew Simpson's anthem *Sing unto the Lord*



'It has brought composers of the highest repute to church music' – Stephen Cleobury

'For me,' says Cleobury, 'the interesting thing is that we have included composers who are not seen primarily as composers of liturgical music. Very often those composers have the most interesting things to say. A case in point would be Goehr, or Maxwell Davies, and for me it brings composers of the highest repute to the field of church music. That's important because it's quite often the case that choral and organ music are seen as "separate".'

The most glaring difference, however, is the presence of accompaniment for most of the anthems of the *Choirbook for the Queen* and which is, for the most part, written for the organ.

'They're all very different in their approach to the organ as an instrument,' says Stephen Disley, sub-organist of Southwark Cathedral and accompanist to the BBC Singers for the recordings of the 11 commissions. 'The Julian Philips piece, *Church Music*, has an independent organ part, for example, but there are cases where I notice that a lot of composers have given the organist no inkling of what sort of sound they want the organ to make in terms of registration or colour.'

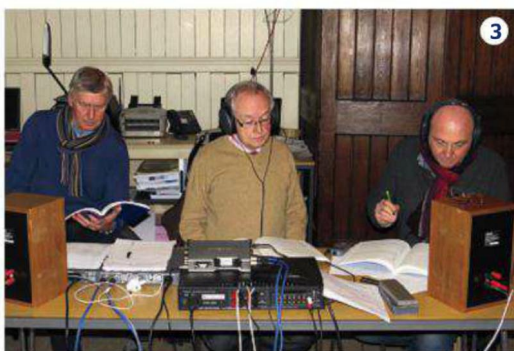
It is striking, in fact, that although there are some technically challenging choral pieces, there are also several pieces with moderately simple choral parts but complex organ accompaniments. It appears to be an interesting and surprisingly unusual way of allowing for the many cathedrals and churches that may have less accomplished choirs but nevertheless highly skilled organists running them. There are very few contemporary, accompanied choral pieces in existence that display that kind of positive discrimination towards the organ.

'The organ is a brilliant thing to have when you're writing church music,' says Judith Bingham, whose *Corpus Christi Carol* is included in the *Choirbook*,

'because it's such an incredibly versatile instrument. We have a plethora of brilliant players in churches, and they are some of the greatest virtuosos we have.'

And therein lies the inherent value in this modern-day historic document. It is a public testament to the hidden thread that has run through England's musical cannon for the best part of a millennium.

'You actually get to hear our choral inheritance when you drop in on an Evensong,' says Maxwell Davies. 'There's bound to be something wonderful happening and I feel this is something worth celebrating.' **G**



1, 2 & 4 The BBC Singers' recording sessions
3 (Left to right) Neil Collier, Priory Records; Stephen Cleobury; Michael Emery, producer

The 11 anthems

David Bedford May God shield you on every step
Judith Bingham Corpus Christi Carol
Diana Burrell O joyful light
Sir Peter Maxwell Davies Advent Calendar
Michael Finnissy Sincerity
Alexander Goehr Cities and thrones and powers
Francis Grier Prayer
Nigel Osborne A Prayer and Two Blessings
Roxanna Panufnik Joy at the Sound
Julian Philips Church Music
David Sawer Wonder



THE RECORDING



'Choirbook for the Queen'

Stephen Disley *org* BBC Singers / Stephen Cleobury
Priory © PRCD1097 (to be reviewed next issue)



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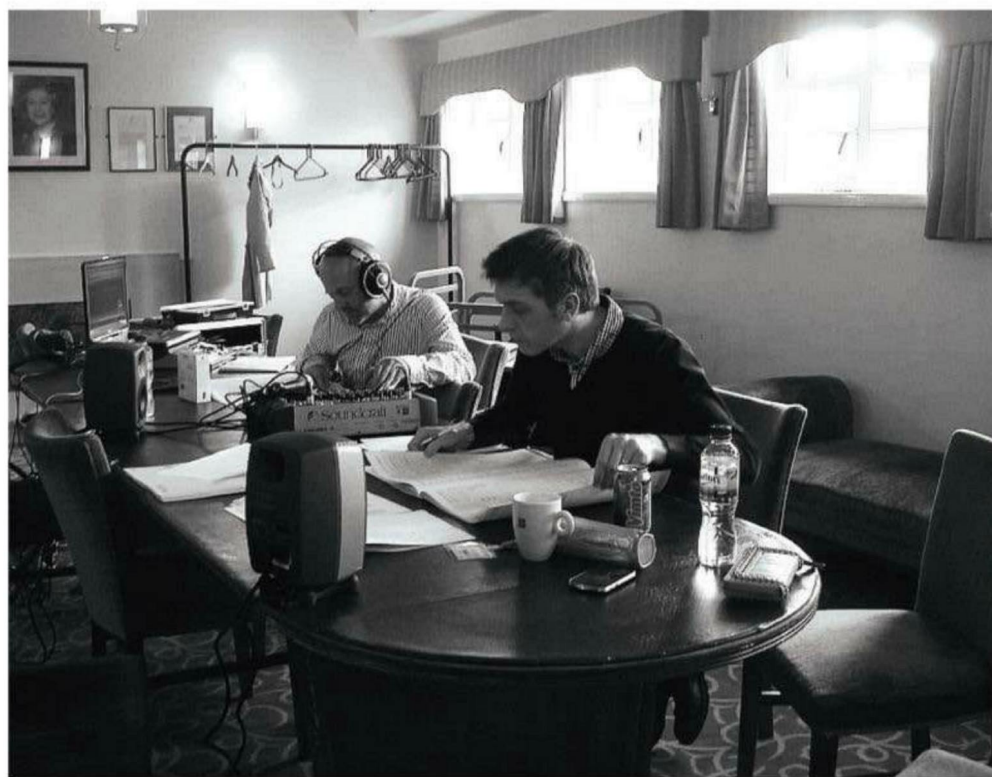
Valais★

NESPRESSO

Julius Bär

GRAMOPHONE *Reviews*

July 2013



Liverpool-born Kenneth Hesketh, right, eavesdrops on his music's recording at Philharmonic Hall ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 56**

KEY TO SYMBOLS



Gramophone Choice

We name the best 12 recordings reviewed in each issue



Critic's Choice

Awarded by a reviewer to a recording which has proved distinctly rewarding



Gramophone Player

Hear a high-quality sample of the music online

- G** Reissue
- H** Historic
- 2** Compact disc (number of discs in set)
- T** Text(s) included
- t** translation(s) included
- S** Synopsis included
- s** subtitles included
- SACD** Super Audio CD (SACD)
- DVD-A** DVD-Audio
- DVD-V** DVD-Video
- BD** Blu-ray
- D** Download only
- nla** no longer available
- aas** all available separately
- oas** only available separately
- £11** £11 and over
- £8** £8 to £10.99
- £6** £6 to £7.99
- £5** £5.99 and below
- (in box-sets, price is per disc)

GRAMOPHONE *Reviewers*



Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Recordings have been ever-present for me, whether listening, collecting, writing, producing or performing. My father knew what he was doing when he encouraged his three-year-old son to march round his study to the *Scherzo* from Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony (Mravinsky). A holiday job in a record shop, run by that dying breed of expert adviser-sellers, was also defining. My mother would send *Gramophone* to me at school, tightly rolled up in brown paper, and I'd read every last word. Joining the panel 20 years ago was a great thrill.

Soon I got involved in freelance producing alongside academic life and trumpet-playing. More than 200 CDs

later, I've enjoyed close associations with Rachel Podger, The Cardinall's Musick, Trevor Pinnock and others. But nothing beats doing it oneself and an off-piste series of solo trumpet discs has been a huge privilege – not least in witnessing the brilliant Philip Hobbs charmingly banning my 'producing' from behind the microphone.

One delight of being principal of the Royal Academy of Music is speaking to students about the creative potential of recording. It remains a medium of prime importance in our cultural life and, judging by the quality and ambition of artistry and programming among RAM students, there may be a golden age round the corner.

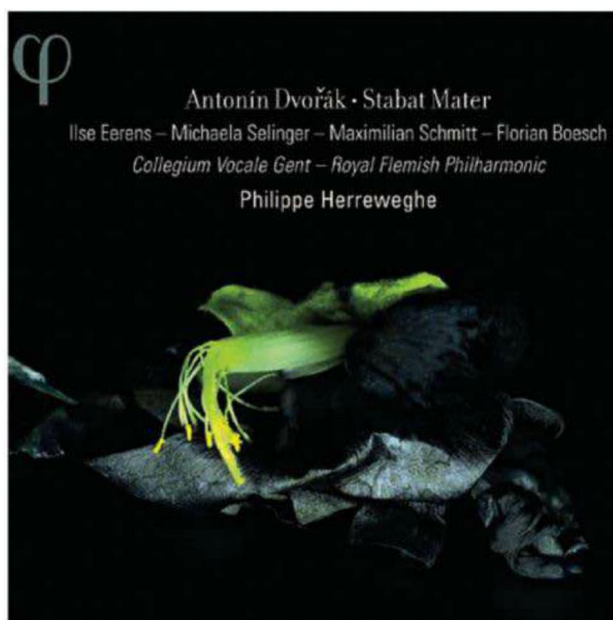
Andrew Achenbach
Nalen Anthoni
Mike Ashman
Philip Clark
Rob Cowan*
Jeremy Dibble
Peter Dickinson
Jed Distler
Duncan Druce
Adrian Edwards
Richard Fairman
David Fallows
David Fanning
Iain Fenlon
Fabrice Fitch
Jonathan

Freeman-Attwood
Caroline Gill
Edward Greenfield
David Gutman
Lindsay Kemp
Philip Kennicott
Tess Knighton
Andrew Lamb
Richard Lawrence
Ivan March

Ivan Moody
Bryce Morrison
Jeremy Nicholas
Christopher Nickol
Geoffrey Norris
Richard Osborne
Stephen Plaistow
Peter Quantrell
Guy Rickards
Malcolm Riley
Marc Rochester
Julie Anne Sadie
Edward Seckerson
Pwyll ap Siôn
Harriet Smith
Ken Smith
David Patrick Stearns
David Threasher
David Vickers
John Warrack
Richard Whitehouse
Arnold Whittall
Richard Wigmore
William Yeoman

* Consultant reviewer

Recording of the Month



'All of Herreweghe's performers clearly love this ravishing music, relishing every detail of this beautifully nuanced score'

Malcolm Riley is moved by a new recording of Dvořák's powerful Stabat mater

Dvořák

Stabat mater, Op 58 B71

Ilse Eerens *sop* Michaela Selinger *mez*

Maximilian Schmitt *ten* Florian Boesch *bass*

Collegium Vocale, Ghent; Royal Flemish

Philharmonic / Philippe Herreweghe

PHI © LPH009 (74' • DDD • T/T)

The *Stabat mater* – a 13th-century poem that describes in 20 verses the imagined sufferings of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross – has attracted a select but significant range of composers over the centuries, from Palestrina and Vivaldi, through Rossini and Howells to Karl Jenkins. Most settings hover around the 40-minute mark (for example Pergolesi's and Poulenc's); Jenkins's stretches to just over an hour. But the biggest-boned of all settings is surely Dvořák's, broken down into 10 wondrously varied – but also wholesomely coherent – movements. It was begun in 1876, with just a piano accompaniment, in memory of his daughter Josefa, who had died two days after her birth the previous year. The full score was completed in 1877 following the deaths of another daughter,

Růžena, and Dvořák's first-born son, Otakar. With such a terrible burden of personal grief and loss hanging over the work's genesis, coupled with what Eduard Hanslick called 'the tear-laden monotony' of the text, one might have expected a work full of gloom and despondency. But Dvořák rose above these personal and technical challenges to create a highly sensuous statement of personal faith and belief clothed in symphonic robes, which culminates in a dramatic 'Amen'.

Although Dvořák's *Stabat mater* is not currently a common feature on choral programmes (more's the pity), the work is well represented in the recording catalogue, with several splendid issues available spanning more than 40 years. Back in September 2012, I considered Neeme Järvi's live 2010 LPO disc to be 'an interpretation to savour'. This dramatic performance was dispatched in just 67 minutes, with the comparatively dry Royal Festival Hall acoustic and close-miking of the soloists no doubt adding to the intensity of the reading, though there were times when the text became rather blurred.

Now Philippe Herreweghe has released on his own PHI label a carefully considered and exquisitely refined recording, made in April 2012 in deSingel, a multi-arts venue on the outskirts of Antwerp. Possibly owing to the less pressurised atmosphere of the studio environment, his timings are generally longer, although the music doesn't sound slower, despite being consistently under Dvořák's metronome markings.

With such heart-tuggingly powerful music this is a small concern. What matters most is that all of Herreweghe's performers clearly love this ravishing music, relishing every detail of this beautifully nuanced score, despite the huge dynamic range demanded.

The orchestral introduction that opens the massive, 17-minute span of the first movement is set in B minor, a tragic enough key, weighted down with a sombre gravitas, and further emphasised by plentiful use of the lower strings, bassoons and flutes at the bottom of their range. The heavy brass are kept well in reserve for the truly climactic



Philippe Herreweghe conducts his Collegium Vocale choir and orchestra in 2012; (below) Dvořák, whose personal grief gave rise to the *Stabat mater*



moments. Here the choral sound is warm and wide without any congestive blasting, with crisp enunciation.

The solo quartet take over for the second movement, an E minor sarabande with a little Bachian lilt as well as an extraordinary passage of soft brass-writing (at 'Pro peccatis suae gentis') which seems to pre-echo a similar patch in Jongen's *Mass* (written some 70

years later). The choral 'Tui nati vulnerati' movement (one of the few passages in a major key) is beautifully effective and makes an excellent 'sample track' for the uninitiated. The Royal Flemish Philharmonic's playing is beyond reproach save for a slightly eager double-bass player who comes in a bar early in the introduction to the 'Fac, ut portem Christi mortem' duet – a bizarre blemish that should surely have been edited out.

What is especially pleasing is the soloists' contribution. They really listen to each other and achieve a subtle blend with plenty of non-competitive 'give and take'. Top prize goes to the tenor Maximilian Schmitt, who is always strain-free and equally magnificent whether leading the chorus in the 'Fac me vere tecum flere' movement or as part of the balanced quartet. Michaela Selinger relishes her big alto solo 'Inflamatus et accensus' with none of the swooping haughtiness of Dagmar Pecková for Järvi, and Ilse Eerens's top Bs crown the choral texture with a bell-like clarity. This new release must be the top choice. **G**

Selected comparison:

LPO, *N Järvi* (9/12) (LPO) LPO0062

Listening points

Your guide to the disc's memorable moments

Track 1, 'Stabat mater dolorosa'

After a Wagnerian dominant pedal note, the falling chromatic phrases are full of flowing tears. The emotional temperature for the whole piece is now set.

Track 2, 'Quis est homo, qui non fleret'

Marvel at Dvořák's pared-down scoring here with the sweetness of the alto and tenor soloists singing in parallel sixths.

Track 5, 'Tui nati vulnerati'

This flowing 6/8 movement is imbued with the spirit of Brahms at his most benign, with

hints of the *German Requiem*'s 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen', with which it shares a key.

Track 9, 'Inflamatus et accensus'

Another vivid piece of word-setting ('Inflamed and burning'); rather Handelian with its striding octave quavers in the bass-line.

Track 10, 'Quando corpus morietur'

After a reminiscence of the very opening of the piece, soloists and chorus unite in an eight-part texture as the soul gains the 'glory of Paradise' in D major.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear an excerpt from this issue's Recording of the Month



Ken Smith on Mahler's Sixth from the Vienna Symphony Orchestra:

'One might say that, instead of playing to win, Luisi and his forces were playing not to lose'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 58**



Philip Clark on Eric Schulz's biopic of Herbert von Karajan:

'Could the next principal conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic be Karajan, death but a minor inconvenience?' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 61**

JS Bach

'Double and Triple Concertos'

Concertos – for Two Violins, BWV1043^a;

for Flute, Violin and Harpsichord, BWV1044^b;

for Oboe and Violin, BWV1060^c;

for Three Violins, after BWV1064^d

^bKaty Birchler fl ^cAlexandra Bellamy ob

^aBojan Čičić, ^dAnna Nowak-Pokrzywinska,

^dJohannes Pramsohler vns ^bMarcin Świątkiewicz hpd

Brecon Baroque / Rachel Podger vn

Channel Classics © CCSSA34113 (65' • DDD/DSD)

JS Bach

Violin Concertos – BWV1041; BWV1042; after 1053.

Concerto for Violin and Harpsichord, after BWV1060

Viktoria Mullova vn

Accademia Bizantina / Ottavio Dantone hpd

Onyx © ONYX4114 (61' • DDD)



Mullova records solo concertos while Podger moves to doubles and triples

The Channel Classics issue follows a disc of Bach solo concertos from Rachel Podger and Brecon Baroque issued in 2010. This programme of double and triple concertos similarly features a one-to-a-part ensemble of players (several of them Podger's former pupils) who share a common approach yet project their parts with individual character. As a result, Bach's contrapuntal lines emerge with unusual clarity, animating each detail of the texture. There's little feeling of an imposed interpretation: even when, at the interrupted cadences in the first movement of BWV1060, the whole ensemble allows time to take a breath, the effect appears spontaneous and unstudied. The outer movements of the well-known Double Concerto are vivacious and poised, and its central *Largo* combines tranquillity with an unimpeded momentum. As for BWV1064 (assumed to have been composed as a triple violin concerto), the verve and clarity of this account allow us to revel in its joyful textural complexity. The same qualities animate the other two concertos: BWV1060 features particularly expressive oboe lines from Alexandra Bellamy, while BWV1044

brings Marcin Świątkiewicz's brilliant playing into focus.

Viktoria Mullova plays the two solo concertos elegantly, with beautiful precision and, in the middle movements, considerable eloquence. These performances make a distinct contrast with Rachel Podger's. Accompanied by a small string band, Mullova is more in the limelight, the orchestra sounding smoother and blander, though enlivened by added *crescendos* and accents. The *Andante* of BWV1041 is especially fine, the expressive freedom of Mullova's line complemented by a perfectly blended, sensitively phrased accompaniment. In the quicker movements, however, I felt the phrasing to be insufficiently animated, especially in the two finales, whose sprightly tempi aren't coupled with that inner life that characterises the Brecon Baroque performances.

The performance of BWV1053, arranged from the E major Harpsichord Concerto, is impressive but the work has a somewhat restricted range for a violin concerto (it's generally assumed that the original was for oboe). In BWV1060, Mullova takes the part usually heard on oboe, with Dantone supplying Bach's second harpsichord part. In the outer movements the balance is not ideal, with the harpsichord often swamped by its accompaniment. In the slow movement, however, with *pizzicato* strings, there's no problem, and it's delightful to hear the melodies alternately on harpsichord and violin.

Duncan Druce

Solo Vc Coms – selected comparison:

Podger, Brecon Baroque (CHCL) CCSSA30910

Beethoven

Concerto for Violin, Cello, Piano and Orchestra, 'Triple', Op 56^a. Piano Trio No 7, 'Archduke', Op 97
Storioni Trio; ^aNetherlands Symphony Orchestra / Jan Willem de Vriend
Challenge Classics © CC72579 (71' • DDD/DSD)



Modern orchestra but period soloists in Beethoven's Triple

Those who might not count the Triple Concerto among Beethoven's finest works could well be swayed by this intelligently

balanced, beautifully played performance.

This is not an aggressively 'historically aware' interpretation but the violin and cello soloists do use gut strings and the pianist plays on a fortepiano of 1815, by no means particularly anachronistic for a work composed in 1803.

The striking feature, first of all, is the power, incisiveness and sense of purpose that de Vriend inspires in the orchestra: from the opening whispers on the lower strings, he builds a strong, rhythmically astute and mellifluously phrased introduction, using minimal vibrato as an expressive tool rather than out of evangelical duty. When the soloists enter, their mellowness of timbre is ideally matched by and pitted against the orchestral sonority; the blend and contrast are finely judged, the soloists establishing a close-knit, animated ensemble in terms of sound and interpretative intent. Lyricism and dynamism are held in judicious equipoise, the former making a particular mark in the reflective slow movement, and both qualities coming into their own in the delightfully poised and vivacious polonaise of the finale, buoyantly accented by de Vriend. Left to their own devices in the *Archduke* Trio, the Storioni are equally impressive, stylistically deep inside the music and conveying both its muscle and its inspired allure. **Geoffrey Norris**

Brian

The Tinker's Wedding (Comedy Overture No 2). English Suite No 4, 'Kindergarten'. Symphony No 13. Violin Concerto^a

^aLorraine McAslan vn

Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Martin Brabbins
Dutton © CDLX7296 (65' • DDD)

Brian

English Suite No 1, Op 12. Symphonies – No 22, 'Symphonia brevis'; No 23; No 24
New Russia State Symphony Orchestra / Alexander Walker

Naxos © 8 572833 (65' • DDD)



New Brian: three symphonies from Moscow and a potpourri from Glasgow

Haverall Brian's First English Suite (1905-06, here receiving its first professional recording) was his first great public success, its six movements as notable for their quirky individualism as for any debts to Elgar or Strauss. There are real gems here, such as 'Interlude', 'a shimmering, glistening essay in sonic impressionism', to quote Malcolm MacDonald, depicting the Shropshire countryside or the riotous, concluding 'Carnival'. The Fourth, *Kindergarten* (c1921), is markedly different, its nine tiny movements (only the final pair exceed 90 seconds' duration) partly an orchestral study for the *Gothic*, the full orchestra used only in the final 'Ashanti Battle Song'.

Marat Bisengaliev and Lionel Friend recorded the Violin Concerto (1934-35) over 20 years ago, mightily impressing Michael Oliver on one of my favourite Brian discs with *The Jolly Miller* and Symphony No. 18. Dutton's new version is a strong rival, McAslan as virtuoso and searching an executant, more Romantic in expression, with a beguiling delicacy of touch. Listen to the unearthly, muted *lento* episode in the finale to hear the difference between McAslan's filigree and Bisengaliev's steel. Dutton's sound has more depth, warmer and much less clinical than Naxos's.

Brian's reputation rests on his symphonies and these discs premiere three and restore to the catalogue the shortest of them all, No 22. After excellent accounts of two of Brian's finest single-span symphonies, Nos 10 and 30 (8/11), Brabbins compels again in one of the toughest and most elusive, No 13 (1959-60), its 16 epic minutes traversing a dark landscape taking in the tragic and the exuberant, alternating barely accompanied solos with the grandeur of a massive orchestra with quadruple woodwind. A score that repays familiarity, Brabbins reveals its lyricism and polyphonic subtlety.

In a way, the triptych of Symphonies Nos 22-24 (1964-65) is easier to assimilate for the collectively larger scale and motivic inter-relationships. No 22, the nine-minute *Symphonia brevis* (the least unfamiliar, having been recorded previously), sets the ground for the combative No 23, an altogether larger work, and the single-span No 24, which attains first victory, then celebration and finally serenity. Brian really did do single-movement symphonies very well.

Naxos's sound is clear and precise, the playing of the New Russia State Symphony Orchestra remarkably idiomatic if understandably tentative occasionally. Their account of *English Suite* No 1 is unquestionably superior to the City of Hull Youth Symphony Orchestra's and much better recorded. Both are highly recommended to anyone wishing to understand this still much-misunderstood composer. **Guy Rickards**

English Ste No 1 – comparative version:

City of Hull Youth SO, Heald-Smith

(4/80^R, 5/95) (CAMP) RR2CD1331/2

Tinker's Wedding – comparative version:

RLPO, Mackerras (4/88^R, 9/93^R) (EMI) 575782-2

Vn Conc – comparative version:

Bisengaliev, BBC Scottish SO, Friend

(8/94^R, 11/05) (NAXO) 8 557775

Britten

Piano Concerto, Op 13^a (including original version of third movement). Violin Concerto, Op 15^b

^bTamsin Little ^{vn} Howard Shelley ^{pf}

BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / Edward Gardner

Chandos © CHAN10764 (77 • DDD)



Little and Shelley play Britten concertos under Gardner

Edward Gardner's operatic background is proving a major selling point for Chandos's Britten series. Each new release comes as though hotfoot from the stage and the highly dramatised performance of the Piano Concerto here thrives as a result. Gardner's BBC Phil leads the rough-and-tumble with its sharp-edged wind and brusque brass, and the exuberant Howard Shelley matches them every inch of the way. The 'Waltz' – what a louche string solo at the start – turns into a rasping piece of Shostakovich-style satire. The 'Impromptu' plays out like a troubled 1930s drama. There is also a substantial bonus in the rarely performed original slow movement (Joanna MacGregor also has it), for which Shelley and Gardner make a strong case.

Though played with similar spirit, the Violin Concerto does not work quite so well. The performance is vividly characterised and within minutes Tasmin Little is biting into the rhythms impressively, but the elegiac quality which is such a haunting feature of this score comes across less effectively. Partly this is because the slower passages sometimes lose momentum, partly because Little has fewer emotionally warm sounds at her disposal than she does energy and commitment – she is razor-sharp, for example, in the second-movement *Vivace*. Recommendations inevitably start with Britten's similar pairing with soloists Richter and Lubotsky. For the Violin Concerto, Little is comparable with the still more wiry and intense Anthony Marwood, while in the Piano Concerto Shelley and Gardner are as gripping as any – another strong Britten release from Chandos. **Richard Fairman**

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

Richter, Lubotsky, ECO, Britten

(8/71^R, 10/89) (LOND) 417 308-2LM

Pf Conc – selected comparison:

MacGregor, ECO, Bedford (2/91^R, 8/05) (NAXO) 8 557197

Vn Conc – selected comparison:

Marwood, BBC Scottish SO, Volkov

(3/12) (HYPE) CDA67801

GRAMOPHONE *Archive*

Beethoven's Triple Concerto

Three star-studded trios in Op 56 – and how Gramophone evaluated them



JULY 1959

Beethoven Triple Concerto, Op 56

Oistrakh, Knushevitsky, Oborin;

Philh Orch / Sargent

Columbia mono ● 33C1062 (10in • 22s 3d)

Most of the playing is of the quality that one would expect from such a team. Oistrakh has a passage or two where he is not quite in his best form, but for the rest he plays with the authority we know so well. Knushevitsky mostly plays beautifully and Oborin is excellent. As to the orchestral contribution, one need only remark that it is in Sir Malcolm's immensely experienced hands. Some of the charm of the finale is missed, which is a pity, for it should be the most immediately likeable part of the whole work. This is a very valuable addition to recorded Beethoven, however, and despite its defects should be missed by no one who wants to understand the composer. *Trevor Harvey*



OCTOBER 1965

Beethoven Triple Concerto, Op 56

Stern, Rose, Istomin;

Philadelphia Orch / Ormandy

CBS ● SBRG72346 (12in • 32s 3d)

The apologies invariably made for Beethoven's Triple Concerto seem to have an effect on performances. I have rarely, if ever, known one which did not in some respect carry an apology with it, and I have rarely, if ever, known one which treated the work in the strong bravura way which makes for success in the *Emperor* or violin concertos. But here is just such a performance. In achieving a sense of size Stern, Rose and Istomin reveal their own stature in the relaxation of the playing. Over and over again they convey the joy of their playing on what could well come to be regarded as a classic record. *Edward Greenfield*



SEPTEMBER 2004

Beethoven Triple Concerto, Op 56

R Capuçon, Maisky, Argerich;

Svizzera Italiana Orch / Rabinovitch-Barakovsky

EMI © 557773-2 (65' • DDD)

Argerich's caution in committing new items from her once extensive repertoire to disc is proverbial. So a warm welcome to her first recording of Beethoven's Triple Concerto where, with Renaud Capuçon and Mischa Maisky, she relinquishes all sense of stardom and does what comes naturally; namely performing music with her friends and allowing the microphones to eavesdrop, as it were, on her unalloyed happiness. Argerich confirms her status among the great chamber-music players, responding to her partners with exemplary tact and verve. This is music-making caught on the wing and filled with an unselfconscious delight and enjoyment. *Bryce Morrison*

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Master of the symphony's trajectory: Franz Welser-Möst conducts Bruckner's Fourth

Bruckner

Symphony No 4, 'Romantic'
(1888 version, ed Korstvedt)

Cleveland Orchestra / Franz Welser-Möst

Video director **Brian Large**

ArtHaus Musik (DVD) 101 682; (Blu-ray) 108 078 (74' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS-HD MA5.0, DD5.0 & PCM stereo • C)
Recorded live at the Stiftsbasilika St Florian,
September 1, 2012



Cleveland's DVD Bruckner series decamps to Austria

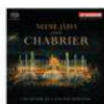
With the final wisps of tuning up and a glimpse of (for some reason) the score of the second flute part, the scene is set for this magnificent performance of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony. Directed by Brian Large, the video was made in September last year at the St Florian Basilica near Linz, where Bruckner had his early experiences of ecclesiastical music and architecture, and where he is buried in a simple tomb beneath the organ. The pace of the video judiciously follows the measured pace of the music and of the performance, slowly homing in on vibrant frescoes in the apse and on the ceiling or on the stucco decoration in the body of the abbey and, at moments of climax, pulling out to reveal the full splendour of the St Florian interior. From the gilded and polished Baroque adornments down to Franz Welser-Möst's jet cufflinks and the second flautist's nose stud, there is always plenty to look at in this DVD: Large knows his score and wisely, though not fussily, focuses on particular instruments when they are prominent in the texture, so that timpani and the cymbal player get a fair look in as well as the individual woodwind and, appropriately in this symphony, the horns. Welser-Möst gives special acknowledgement to

the Cleveland Orchestra's principal horn at the end, when a standing ovation from the audience seems the entirely fitting response to a superbly judged musical and visual venture.

Debate as to the preferred version of Bruckner's *Romantic* Symphony has always been rife, given its complicated history of revisions during Bruckner's lifetime and its post-mortem editing. This performance pins its colours to the mast of the final version, the one in which the symphony first appeared in print in 1889 and which has now received new scholarly treatment from Benjamin Korstvedt. Whatever your views on the relative merits of Haas, Nowak or Korstvedt, the sound of the Cleveland Orchestra is superb, refined in detail and matching the grandeur of surroundings that furnish a glorious acoustical bloom. Welser-Möst, with calm control, is a master of the symphony's structural and emotional trajectory. **Geoffrey Norris**

Chabrier

Joyeuse marche. *Gwendoline* - Overture.
Habanera. *España*. *Lamento*. *Bourrée fantasque*.
Suite pastorale. *L'étoile* - Overture; *Entr'acte* before Act 2; *Entr'acte* before Act 3. *Le roi malgré lui* - *Fête polonaise*; *Danse slave*
Suisse Romande Orchestra / Neeme Järvi
Chandos (CD) CHSA5122 (79' • DDD/DSD)



Järvi's Swiss orchestra profile the French Romantic

Listening to Chabrier's *Joyeuse marche* of about 1888 you cannot help wondering whether it was from such a piece that Poulenc got the idea for the laconic phrase and perky rhythmic and harmonic gymnastics that, in certain moods, characterised his own music.

In the *Joyeuse marche* there is a certain pre-echoing of, for instance, the finales of Poulenc's woodwind sonatas or the Piano Sextet. Elsewhere on this delightful disc there are hints of the influences that Chabrier derived from Wagner in works such as the opera *Gwendoline* (the Overture is included here), and at times a curious foretaste in the *Bourrée fantasque* of the sort of evanescent motifs that were to be part of the fabric of Debussy's *Jeux*.

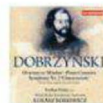
Above all, though, it is Chabrier's own personality that shines through the nine works performed with luminous warmth by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under its music and artistic director Neeme Järvi. No Chabrier programme would really be complete without *España*, and here it is played with exuberance and gleaming colour tempered appropriately with Gallic taste. The *Habanera*, which, like *España*, was composed in the 1880s, is another of the evocative souvenirs inspired by Chabrier's holidaying in Spain. The *Suite pastorale*, by contrast, looks back to his childhood in the Auvergne. Extracts from the operas *L'étoile* and *Le roi malgré lui* attest to the range of Chabrier's output, the unifying feeling being the sheer joy, craftsmanship and radiance that Chabrier's music possesses and which these performances encapsulate so ear-catchingly. **Geoffrey Norris**

Dobrzyński

Monbar, or the Filibusters - Overture. Piano Concerto, Op 2. Symphony No 2, 'Characteristic', Op 15 (including original slow movt)

^a**Emilian Madey pf**

Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Łukasz Borowicz
Chandos (CD) CHAN10778 (97' • DDD)



Orchestral works by the Chopin contemporary who stayed put

Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński (1807-67) was a contemporary of Chopin; both exhibited a precocious talent for the piano and were students of Józef Elsner (1769-1854) at the Warsaw Conservatory. Whereas Chopin headed west shortly before the November Uprising of 1830, Dobrzyński remained in Poland where he struggled to make much headway until 1834, when the second of his two symphonies scooped a prestigious composition prize in Vienna. It's engagingly tuneful, soundly constructed and unashamedly home-grown in flavour, each movement taking its cue from a Polish national dance - namely a polonaise, kujawiak, mazurka and krakowiak. However, Dobrzyński was prouder still of his opera *Monbar*, composed between 1836 and 1838 but not staged until 1863 (that same year's January Uprising condemned it to a cruelly short run of just three performances). The Overture serves up a highly enjoyable cocktail of Weber and Rossini, with some ear-ticklingly

imaginative scoring for the bass clarinet. Rather less distinctive is the very early Piano Concerto of 1824, though it remains a mightily impressive achievement for a teenager. Fascinatingly, the slow movement's middle portion would seem to pre-echo its counterpart in Chopin's F minor Concerto.

The music-making on this enterprising Chandos twofer brings no cause for complaint. Emilian Madey proves an uncommonly deft and sympathetic soloist in the concerto, and Łukasz Borowicz draws some nicely turned and consistently bright-eyed playing from the Polish Radio SO. The sound, too, is very good, if lacking that last ounce of bloom and richness.

Andrew Achenbach

Dvořák

Symphonies - No 3, Op 10 B34; No 7, Op 70 B141

Nuremberg State Philharmonic Orchestra /

Marcus Bosch

Coviello (P) COV31212 (74' • DDD)



Bosch moves to Dvořák and the 'original' Seventh

Lesson No 1: always read the small print. Beyond Marcus Bosch's nicely proportioned account of the Seventh Symphony's *Allegro maestoso* first movement, the *Adagio* clocks up what at first glance seems to be a very generous 12'47" (nine to 11 minutes seems to be an approximate average). The tempo isn't especially slow; but hold on, what's happening from around 4'17"? Are we preparing for a rare internal repeat? Yes and no. Scroll forwards to 5'39" and it becomes obvious that what we're listening to is musically quite different to what we were hitherto familiar with. It is in fact the original version of the movement, some 50 bars longer than the revision which Dvořák prepared after the English premiere, where *Andante sostenuto* becomes a rather more tranquil *Poco adagio*. Listening through a couple of times confirms, at least to these ears, that in shortening and tweaking the movement Dvořák knew exactly what he was doing, but it's fascinating to hear this more expansive and in some respects more dramatic first shot (which has been skilfully edited by Jonathan Del Mar). The remainder of the performance is good rather than exceptional, with spirited readings of the last two movements.

Lesson No 2: when it comes to tempo indications, don't always assume that the composer knows best. In the more graceful (but musically less imposing) Third Symphony, the middle movement is marked *Adagio molto*, *tempo di marcia*, which leaves options wide open. By taking the *tempo di marcia* at face value, as Neeme Järvi, Vladimír Válek and Marcus Bosch do, you hear more in the way of thematic relationships with other parts of the symphony. Turn to Václav Smetáček or Václav

Neumann, both of whom take *Adagio molto* as their lead (with a correspondingly broader tempo), and those connections are more difficult to follow. Also, this being relatively early Dvořák, the movement can seem to rather outstay its welcome, which at the faster tempo it doesn't. Still, Smetáček's recording has a unique airiness about it though Bosch and Válek (in particular) offer a satisfying option overall, with Bosch's disc being fairly indispensable for all committed Dvořákians given the musical value of that Seventh Symphony 'original' slow movement.

Rob Cowan

Sym No 3 – selected comparison:

Prague SO, Smetáček (10/60⁸, 1/65⁸) (SUPR) SU3968-2

Czech PO, Neumann (3/84⁸) (SUPR) SU3703-2

RSNO, N Järvi (5/88) (CHAN) CHAN8575

Czech RSO, Válek (3/05) (SUPR) SU3802-2

Dvořák

Symphony No 9, 'From the New World',

Op 95 B178^a. Heroic Song, Op 111 B199^b

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra /

Andris Nelsons

BR-Klassik (P) 900116 (64' • DDD)

Recorded live at the ^aHerkulesaal, Munich,

December 1-3, 2010; ^bPhilharmonie im Gasteig,

Munich, April 25-27, 2012



Live 'New World' from Nelsons in three Munich concerts

Hard on the heels of Claus Peter Flor's exceptional *New World* with the Malaysian PO (BIS, 2/13) comes this scarcely less invigorating offering from Munich. Captured live over three concerts during December 2010 within the glorious Herkulesaal acoustic, it finds Andris Nelsons drawing the most sumptuously refined, pungently characterful and bracingly alert response from the Bavarian RSO. His is a no-holds-barred conception of powerful expressive scope, intrepid incident and obvious affection. Certainly, he moulds the first movement's life-enhancing secondary material with the most disarming tenderness; the finale's big *maestoso tutti*, too, fairly blaze with authority. If I'm being totally honest, there are a handful of interpretative decisions I'm still coming to terms with (for instance, at fig 9 or 6'13" in the finale, he makes rather a meal of Dvořák's *Poco meno mosso* marking).

In other words, Nelsons's reading doesn't (as yet) quite stack up with the sheer emotional clout and breathtaking inevitability of, say, Rafael Kubelík's miraculously fresh broadcast performance from June 1980 with this same band (Orfeo d'Or). At the same time, it would be mean not to extend an enthusiastic welcome to this excitingly combustible newcomer, which comes harnessed to a fine performance of the little-known 1897 symphonic poem *Heroic Song*. Indeed, Nelsons's reading – as thrillingly

committed as it is consistently insightful – extracts every ounce of eloquence from what remains at best a fitfully inspired creation. A very strong recommendation. **Andrew Achenbach**

New World Sym – selected comparison:

Bavarian RSO, Kubelík (ORFE) C596 031B

Glass

Symphony No 3. The Hours – Suite (arr Riesman)^a

^aMichael Riesman pf

Manitoba Chamber Orchestra / Anne Manson

Orange Mountain Music (P) OMM0086 (49' • DDD)

Recorded live at CBC Glenn Gould Studio, Toronto,

September 17, 2011



Canadian recording for Glass's Third and new 'Hours' suite

If the success of a film score lies in its ability to float free from the film's images and exist instead as 'pure' music, then Philip Glass's soundtrack to *The Hours* is set to become one of the composer's most celebrated works. Longtime Glass collaborator Michael Riesman produced a three-movement piano concerto-style suite from the soundtrack soon after the film's release but it has taken 10 years for the work finally to see the light of day.

Creating three relatively large-scale movements from a substantial number of small, fragmentary film cues can be tricky but Glass's block-like structures seem custom-built for such a purpose. The first movement sets 'The Poet Acts' and 'Morning Passages' against one another as if they were competing subjects in a symphonic argument. The movement reaches a dark and uncertain close with musical quotes from 'Dead Things'. Glass's score often draws from a pool of common thematic and harmonic materials, and this allows Riesman to cleverly tie together the opening and closing sections of the suite in the final movement. There's plenty of drama and intensity here but the music still seems at times to lack visual support.

The other work on this recording is unequivocally purpose-built for the concert hall. Unlike the grand design of Symphonies Nos 2, 7 and 9, Glass's intimate Symphony No 3 is glorified chamber music at its very best, where each player is treated as a soloist in his own right. There are moments in the second and third movements when the score splits into 19 individual lines. In this absorbing and impressive performance, Anne Manson and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra bring out Glass's intricate polyphonic weave with brilliant ease and assurance. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Grieg

Violin Concertos (based on the violin sonatas, orch Kraggerud/Lund) – No 1, Op 8; No 2, Op 13; No 3, Op 45

Tromsø Chamber Orchestra / Henning Kraggerud vln

Naxos (S) 8 573137 (67' • DDD)



Three new concertos to play: members of the Tromsø Chamber Orchestra, who accompany Henning Kraggerud in Grieg



Kraggerud and Lund orchestrate Grieg sonatas

In arranging Grieg's violin and piano sonatas for violin and chamber orchestra, Henning Kraggerud and Bernt Simen Lund (a member of the Tromsø Chamber Orchestra) have left the original violin part intact, recasting the piano part for string orchestra plus four woodwind instruments. The arrangements, clever and imaginative, are for the most part strikingly successful; the intense drama of the opening *Allegro* of Op 45 is well served by the sustaining power of the strings, and the colourful sonorities heard in the finales of Opp 8 and 13 accentuate the verve and energy of these ebullient pieces. And the orchestration of the first page of Op 45's *Andante* as a flute solo sounds really beautiful.

Certain things are lost, of course – the subtle and intimate exchanges between violin and piano (so beautifully realised on Kraggerud's 1996 Naxos recording with Helge Kjekshus), and those slight but significant switches of atmosphere and mood, in the middle movement of Op 13, for instance – which in the orchestral version appear too overt and 'spelled out'. On a more general level, one could question the necessity for these arrangements; Grieg's writing for the two instruments is masterly, and in no way are these

concertos improvements on the originals. But Kraggerud, as director of the Tromsø Chamber Orchestra, has provided its players with some very attractive repertoire and they clearly respond with enthusiasm, producing performances that are precise, alert and expressive. A fascinating supplement to Kraggerud's earlier recording, and thoroughly recommended. **Duncan Druce**

Hesketh

A Rhyme for the Season^a. Ein Lichtspiel

(after Moholy-Nagy)^b. Graven Image^a.

Wunderkammer(konzert)^b.

At God speeded summer's end^a

^bEnsemble 10/10 / Clark Rundell; ^aRoyal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / Christoph-Mathias Mueller
NMC © NMCD186 (65' • DDD)



Merseyside ensembles record local composer

Titling this disc 'Wunderkammer(konzert)', with a Joseph Cornell collection of miniature found objects as cover image, flags up Kenneth Hesketh's propensity for setting off clearly delineated, well-contrasted shapes against each other. It also underlines the basic difference between music's inevitable abstractions and what the visual arts can offer. Composers need to give memorable identities to their chosen materials or run the risk of blandness; and

although Hesketh (*b*1968) might not always manage the haunting uncanniness found in British contemporaries such as Oliver Knussen, George Benjamin or Thomas Adès, he rarely lapses into mere exoticism.

The earliest work, *At God speeded summer's end*, with its title quoting Dylan Thomas, comes closest to such exoticism, and there are times in *Wunderkammer(konzert)* itself when decorative flamboyance or rhapsodic rumination threaten to derail the musical machine. Hesketh makes many references to mechanisms in his booklet-notes but at its best his music offsets such devices by evoking the mystery of more natural phenomena. In *Ein Lichtspiel (after Moholy-Nagy)*, the 'play of light' flickers and flares through a well-proportioned sequence of pungently orchestrated sound-images: here, as throughout, performance and recording are first-rate.

As *A Rhyme for the Season* vividly suggests, what can sound initially like a kind of updated Waltonian breeziness is usually a facade hinting at something less genial and easy-going. And although *Graven Image* might be too well-upholstered in its orchestral resplendence to chill the blood consistently, it has strongly sustained areas of turbulence and a complementary capacity for reflection which combine to offer substantial rewards.

Arnold Whittall

Holmboe

'Concertos'

Viola Concerto, Op 189^a. Concerto for Orchestra.
Violin Concerto No 2, Op 139^b

^bErik Heide *vn* ^aLars Anders Tomter *va* Norrköping
Symphony Orchestra / Dima Slobodeniouk
Dacapo © 6 220599 (59' • DDD/DSD)

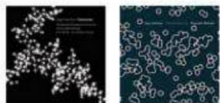
Holmboe

'Chamber Music, Vol 2'

Eco, Op 186. Aspects, Op 72. Solo Cello Sonata,
Op 101. Quartetto medico, Op 70. Sextet, Op 114

Ensemble MidtVest

Dacapo © 8 226074 (70' • DDD)



Holmboe concertos in Norrköping and a second chamber disc from MidtVest

Holmboe's reputation may rest ultimately on his symphonies and string quartets but he was prolific in a vast array of forms, not least choral music – five volumes of the *Liber cantorum* – and, of course, 13 numbered concertos and a clutch of unnumbered ones. The three collected on Dacapo's latest orchestral foray into Holmboe are from this last group, all receiving their first recordings.

The Viola Concerto (1992) is a lithe and energetic affair, a typical example of late Holmboe. Its dynamic, vigorous tattoo brings that of the Twelfth Symphony to mind and the work builds on this rhetorical statement through a kaleidoscopic sequence of motivic and textural developments that is a model of concision. That this is one of the finest viola concertos ever penned I have not the slightest doubt, and it is thrown off with dazzling virtuosity by Tomter and the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra under Russian-born, Finnish-resident Dima Slobodeniouk, who displays a real affinity for Holmboe's idiom. The early, single-span Concerto for Orchestra (1929) is less characteristic of the mature composer, the rhetoric less smoothly assimilated into the musical flow, but is a hugely vital creation none the less. The Second Violin Concerto (1979), a diptych like that for viola, is more reflective in tone, closer in spirit to the Eleventh Symphony, beautifully laid out for the instruments and executed compellingly by Heide.

Ensemble MidtVest's follow-up to their very well-received first chamber music disc (1/12) is equally impressive. Here is a different side to the composer, not the public orator but the craftsman of exquisitely designed ensemble pieces as much a delight to play as to hear. The *Quartetto medico* (1956), written for a group of musical doctors, reveals Holmboe's deadpan wit, all too little displayed elsewhere. The Solo Cello Sonata (1968–69) has been recorded before – notably by Morten Zeuthen (nla) – but

Jonathan Slaatto is fully equal to its severe virtuosity. Ensemble MidtVest provide an even more subtly nuanced account of the Op 114 Sextet, for wind and string trios, than their rivals on Rondo, as they do of the wind quintet *Aspects* (1957). *Eco* (1991) for clarinet, cello and piano is another fine example of Holmboe's ability to rethink existing genres from his own personal perspective. Recommended.

Guy Rickards

Sextet – comparative version:

Larsen, Jensen, Mojzer, Palola, Lehto, Väyrynen

(ROND) RCD8362

Kalabis

Concerto for Bassoon and Wind Instruments,
Op 61^a. Trumpet Concerto, 'Le tambour de
villevieille', Op 36^b. Violin Concertos – No 1, Op 17^c;
No 2, Op 49^d. Concerto for Piano and Wind
Instruments, Op 64^e. Harpsichord Concerto, Op 42^f.
Concerto for Large Orchestra, Op 25^g. Symphonic
Variations, Op 24^h. Symphonies – No 2, 'Sinfonia
paci's', Op 18ⁱ; No 3, Op 33^j

^aJiří Formáček *bn* ^bMiroslav Kejmar *tpt* ^cPetr Škvor,

^dJosef Suk *vn* ^eMilan Langer *pf* ^fZuzana Růžicková

hpd ^gCzech Philharmonic Wind Ensemble /

Miloš Formáček; ^{dghil}Czech Philharmonic Orchestra /

ⁱJiří Bělohlávek, ^jZdeněk Košler, ^hVáclav Neumann,

^dWolfgang Sawallisch, ^gLadislav Slovák; ⁱPrague

Chamber Orchestra / Viktor Kalabis; ^hPrague

Radio Symphony Orchestra / Miloš Konvalinka;

^ePrague Symphony Orchestra / ^fViktor Kalabis,

^gTomáš Koutník

Supraphon Archiv © ③ SU4109-2 (3h 33' • DDD)

From Supraphon, Panton and Czech Radio originals



Assorted Czech recordings of Martinů's successor Kalabis

Sadly, even the name, let alone the music, of Viktor Kalabis (1923–2006) will be unknown to most readers, yet he was arguably the most important Czech composer in the period following the death of Martinů. Aleš Březina avers 'his beginnings...were deeply influenced by people like Stravinsky and Hindemith, Honegger and Bartók – and Martinů of course'. Even more important is his role as one of the expressive consciences of post-war Czechia; he never joined the Communist Party and while he did not retreat into external exile, Kalabis wrote the music that he needed to write, not what the cultural apparatchiks of Prague wanted. His life and music prompted attacks and harassment from officialdom, not least for the pacific, universalist sentiments behind the compelling Second Symphony, *Sinfonia paci's* (1959–61; expressive of the Cold War tensions leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis), or marrying a Holocaust survivor – the harpsichordist Zuzana Růžicková – in 1952 in a dark period of Czech history.

The present collection – collated from the archives of Supraphon, Panton and Czech

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CREDIT SUISSE

Radio across four decades – is in many respects a sister collection to that issued by MSR in 2010 (MS1350). The *Sinfonia pacis*, like the Third (1970-71), has been available before fitfully as an import. A relatively early work betraying various stylistic influences, it showcases his skill in transforming them (as in the vividly freewheeling *scherzo*, a real crowd-pleaser, and glowing finale), as do the subtle Symphonic Variations (1964) and Concerto for Large Orchestra (1965-66). The Third Symphony is more eloquent still, a moving reflection of the short-lived Prague Spring, and remains one of this composer's finest and most serious utterances. This Czech Philharmonic's playing is a touch more refined than the Prague Radio Symphony on Panton, Bělohávek's interpretation as intense.

The concertos show a different, indeed variegated side of Kalabis's compositional persona, most vividly perhaps in the two violin concertos (1958-59, 1977-78), the latter played forcefully by Josef Suk no less, although it must be said that Petr Škvor, under the composer's direction, is no less persuasive in the turbulent First. The Harpsichord Concerto (1974-75) is delivered with crisp panache by Kalabis (conducting) and his wife (also booklet annotator) and there are fine performances by all the soloists here, ably accompanied by the cream of Prague's orchestras. What this music needs now is to be taken up widely by the best of Europe's ensembles, to place it unequivocally on the mainstream map. Till that time, this excellent collection, despite the variable age and quality of some recordings, will do very nicely in bringing his name before a wider audience. **Guy Rickards**

Sym No 3 – comparative version:

Prague RSO, Bělohávek (1/01*) (SUPR) 81 9027-2011

Mahler • Debussy

Debussy *Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune*
(arr Schoenberg) **Mahler** Symphony No 4
(arr Stein)^a

^aSónia Grané *sop* Royal Academy of Music Ensemble / Trevor Pinnock

Linn (E) CKD 438 (65' • DDD)



Pinnock at the RAM for 'reduced' Mahler and Debussy

Just when you thought that last season's Mahler centenary had exhausted the possibilities of new recruits to the late Romantics, we can now add Trevor Pinnock. And yet the artistic values that Pinnock has long espoused, from textural clarity to historically informed performance, prove crucial to this particular project.

Schoenberg, on the other hand, is hardly new in the Mahler picture, not least because of the history of his Society for Private Musical Performances. Although Schoenberg's own arrangements of *Songs of a Wayfarer* and

especially *Das Lied von der Erde* (which lay in sketches till the 1980s) had a good run last year, examples like this 1921 arrangement of the Fourth Symphony by early Schoenberg pupil Erwin Stein long remained in the footnotes. Cue the research division.

This Mahler Fourth, reconstructed by conductor Alexander Platt from Stein's notations on a full symphonic score, draws a clear line to the piece's roots in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Under Pinnock, the Royal Academy of Music's Chamber Ensemble bring to the surface the lithe counterpoint that usually lumbers under thicker string textures, while soprano Sónia Grané succeeds admirably in illuminating the piece's inner folksong.

No less successful is Schoenberg's arrangement of Debussy's *Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune*, which essentially serves as the programme's overture. Despite reassigning a few instrumental lines and having the harmonium approximate the sustained wind sonorities, Schoenberg remains largely faithful to the original. It's not a word often associated with the composer, but Schoenberg rarely sounds so sensuous. **Ken Smith**

Mahler

Symphony No 6

Vienna Symphony Orchestra / Fabio Luisi

Solo Musica Wiener Symphoniker (M) (2) WS003
(84' • DDD)



Vienna Symphony's own label takes in Mahler's 'Tragic'

For the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, which launched its own label recently with Mahler's perhaps too-often recorded First Symphony (4/13), a logical follow-up would seem be the composer's Sixth, which rather leans on the opposite side of the exposure scale. In any case, the playing certainly unfolds as if the expectations are lower, with an expansive ease that remains generally pleasant to the ear.

Unfortunately, it rarely gets beyond that. Simply put, the Vienna Symphony lacks the depth of rapport with the music exhibited by the higher-profile Vienna Philharmonic and despite a few genuinely memorable moments, very little in Fabio Luisi's approach to the piece is truly distinctive. A promising start in the opening *Allegro*, unfolding with appropriate weight and pacing, is soon squandered with the entrance of the second theme (the famous 'Alma portrait'). By the time Luisi and his Viennese forces ease their way into the *Andante*, the bottom has fallen out of the tautness they were able to build at the beginning.

Regarding the age-old debate about where to put the *Scherzo*, Luisi's placing of it as the third movement – and the opening of the second CD – is perhaps the most inspired part of the

programme. Just as Mahler's score echoes themes from the first movement, Luisi manages to recreate the intensity of the opening. This time, though, the tension remains consistent; only past the *Scherzo* and into the finale does the balance begin to flag, with Mahler's contrasting themes never really finding a comfortable balance.

From a diagnostic point of view, this recording provides ample opportunities for discussion. There is, first of all, a preference for ease and grace over emotional contrast, as well as a false conflation between slow tempi and a lack of intensity. One might say that, instead of playing to win, Luisi and his forces were playing not to lose. It's a strategy that occasionally wins sporting matches and court cases – or an occasional pleasant evening in the concert hall – but it hardly produces statements for the ages. **Ken Smith**

Rachmaninov

Symphony No 3, Op 44. Symphonic Dances, Op 45

Detroit Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin

Naxos (S) 8 573051 (74' • DDD)



Follow-up to Slatkin's Detroit Rachmaninov Second

The 2009 release of the Second Symphony was a reminder of Leonard Slatkin's sympathy for Rachmaninov's music and its emotional ebb and flow. Here, again conducting his Detroit orchestra, he is wise enough to know that the Third Symphony and the *Symphonic Dances* are very different beasts. Nostalgia was a powerful stimulus for Rachmaninov in both works, nostalgia for his lost Russian homeland in the symphony, nostalgia for life past in the *Symphonic Dances* with their references back to the First Symphony and, in the finale, to an energised version of a passage from the *All-Night Vigil*. Without exaggerating the point, Slatkin captures this sense of sadness and world-weariness but, crucially, also recognises the new piquancy of harmony, clarity of texture and rhythmic incisiveness that mark the works of Rachmaninov's later years. The Detroit players have a sure instinct for the poignancy and sighs of the music, for its intricate but lucidly woven fabric and also for its passion and drive. Details of the scoring, so critical in any Rachmaninov interpretation, are tellingly etched in here in the context of a perceptively chosen spectrum of dynamics.

Structurally and from the point of view of identifying shifting moods, Slatkin has a secure grasp in both pieces, finding sublime, yearning wistfulness at the centre of the finale of the *Symphonic Dances* but harnessing vigour and bite for a thrilling conclusion – and he lets the ominous crash of the tam-tam echo on after the final chord, just as it should.

Geoffrey Norris

Schubert

Symphonies - No 5, D485; No 6, D589

Potsdam Chamber Academy / Antonella Manacorda
Sony Classical © 88765 42696-2 (60' • DDD)

Schubert

Symphonies - No 6, D589; No 8, 'Unfinished', D759

SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart /
Sir Roger Norrington
Hänssler Classic © CD93 298 (59' • DDD)



Schubert symphonies including Sixths from Potsdam and Stuttgart

The Sixth is the most egregious of Schubert's eight symphonies. With an opening movement which could pass muster as one of Schubert's overtures in the Italian style and a finale which has about it something of the air of an *al fresco* ramble, it is more a symphonic suite than a fully fledged symphony. The fact that neither of the outer movements can take much pace – a point first recognised on record by Sir Thomas Beecham, whose patrician way with the symphony is rarely without interest – is a further indication of its *divertissement*-like nature. Both Antonella Manacorda and Sir Roger Norrington conduct strong, steady, moderately paced readings, which is very much the modern way as exemplified by Manacorda's erstwhile colleague Claudio Abbado in his fine Chamber Orchestra of Europe recording.

'Lean of tone and impetuous' was how Richard Wigmore described Manacorda's Schubert when reviewing the Potsdam Kammerakademie's coupling of the Third and Eighth symphonies last October. It's a description I recognise less in this wonderfully strong and incisive account of the Sixth, more in Manacorda's occasionally over-impulsive way with the ineffably lovely Fifth Symphony. Manacorda's shaping of the symphony's opening bars is as beguiling as Beecham's but the longer the first movement of this Arcadian revel goes on, the more Manacorda seems determined to 'develop' the music with unexpected emphases and ever more insistent accents.

Norrington's new Stuttgart recordings of the Sixth and Eighth symphonies are weightier and more imposing than his early 1990s versions with the London Classical Players. In the *Unfinished* Symphony the gauntness and grandeur of the sound palette – wonderfully minatory cellos and basses at the very start – allied to the essentially classical temper of Norrington's reading give the music a powerful sense of tragic inevitability. The reading of the first movement has a Klemperer-like quality to it (EMI, 4/64th). I only wish Norrington had followed Klemperer in slowing the slow movement by a few additional points on the

metronome. As it is, the old problem of having two triple-time movements in too similar a pulse isn't entirely avoided. **Richard Osborne**

Syms Nos 5 and 6 – selected comparisons:

RPO, Beecham (4/60th, 9/56th) (EMI) 566984-2

COE, Abbado (9/89) (DG) 423 654-2GH

Syms Nos 6 and 8 – selected comparison:

LCP, Norrington (5/92th) (VIRG) 562227-2

Shostakovich

Symphony No 8, Op 65

London Philharmonic Orchestra /

Gennadi Rozhdestvensky

LPO © LPO0069 (60' • AAD)

Recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall, London,
October 30, 1983



Live 1983 Eighth from the LPO and Rozhdestvensky

So much in the opening paragraph of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony mirrors the Fifth: only it's the dark side of the equation, the initial string declamation – the sound of defiance – giving way to a second idea where the rocking accompaniment (so redolent of the Fifth) would be reassuring if it weren't so anxious. I've often wondered if these parallels were intentional, as in this time I'm going to tell it as it really is and pay no heed to those who would demand an optimistic, even triumphant, ending. There is no triumphalism, no *Leningrad*-like celebration of a nation's fortitude in this score's pages. Some of Shostakovich's bleakest utterances reside here.

Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and the London Philharmonic Orchestra communicate a tangible sense of authenticity in what is a tense live performance from 1983. The physical and spiritual *tinta* of the music is drawn in suitably unadorned colours, raw in resistance, pallid in desolation. It isn't always quite as tight as one might like – the ugly *moto perpetuo* of the third movement could have been notched a bit in terms of its trenchancy, though details like the raucousness of the trumpet and side drum in the Trio most certainly hit the spot, as do those seismic climaxes with their rolling percussion upheavals. There is, as there should be, a frightening release of energy in those passages – and the sound is not at all bad for its vintage, with more than sufficient heft where bass drum and tam-tam threaten to knock the civilised world off its axis.

Rozhdestvensky could be a comical as well as laid-back character on the podium and the wryness of his clowning really comes through in the *Allegretto* second movement, where the little fife and drum idea grows progressively more malicious – but still with a smile. The eternal *passacaglia* of the fourth-movement *Largo* is possessed of great weariness and it's here that one realises how much of this marvellous work's outrage is communicated

IN THE STUDIO

An inside view of who's before the
mics and what they're recording

• Mozart from Piemontesi

Pianist Francesco Piemontesi will follow his recent concerto disc for Naïve with recordings of piano sonatas by Mozart. Exact repertoire details were unconfirmed as *Gramophone* went to press but the Swiss pianist will take to the RSI studios in Lugano in late summer to make the recording – his first solo disc for the label – which will be released in 2014.



• South-coast Prokofiev

Recent Royal Philharmonic Society Award-winner Kirill Karabits (above) is to record a cycle of symphonies and concertos by Prokofiev with his Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. The Ukrainian will record the *Sinfonia concertante* with cellist Truls Mørk in June, followed by the Third and Seventh Symphonies in July – both for Onyx. Release dates are to be confirmed.

• Nørgård in Vienna

The Vienna Philharmonic has been getting to know the music of Dane Per Nørgård, recording the First and Eighth symphonies (the latter premiered at the end of 2012) for Dacapo. Sakari Oramo conducted the sessions as this issue went to press. Look out for a review and a full session report next year.

• Beethoven on screen

Following last month's feature on the orchestra's tour of Japan with Mariss Jansons, performances of Beethoven's symphonies from the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra on that very tour will be released on ArtHaus Musik DVD and Blu-ray discs in September.

• The disc of Mormon

Byrn Terfel has just returned from Salt Lake City, where he recorded an album with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Ten new arrangements by Mack Wilberg are said to have 'a distinctly Americana feel' and include songs such as 'Shenandoah', 'Homeward Bound' and 'Deep River'. DG will release the disc in September.



Neeme Järvi and Marianne Thorsen recording Svendsen in Bergen

quietly. Its wonderful closing bars offer a modicum of solace but the darkness prevails. I've a feeling that this is one of those performances where the atmosphere in the hall will have added immeasurably to its impact – but there's still no denying its intensity and *echt* Russianism. **Edward Seckerson**

Svendsen

'Orchestral Works, Vol 3'

Norwegian Artists' Carnival, Op 14.

Violin Concerto, Op 6^a. Two Icelandic Melodies.

Symphony No 1, Op 4

^aMarianne Thorsen *vln*

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra / Neeme Järvi

Chandos © CHAN10766 (74' • DDD)



Third disc of Svendsen from the Bergen Philharmonic

The Chandos/Järvi/Svendsen survey moves backwards to the late 1860s and early 1870s, when the newly Leipzig-graduated composer was travelling Europe to absorb its new music – especially Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner – and even flipping to America to get married to a Jewish lady (who would, however, soon convert to Christianity, overseen by her husband's new friends Richard and Cosima Wagner as godparents).

At this point in his career Svendsen's early-attained fluency in orchestration and embracing of new formal ideas had not outstripped his melodic invention. The Violin Concerto was completed in the same year, 1870, as the intriguing Cello Concerto featured in Vol 2 of this series (A/12). The violin's contribution, more obbligato than soloist proper, justifies both comparisons to Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* and the leader-only balance given to Marianne Thorsen. In an age

where the orchestra was still standing back, Paganini concerto-style, to let the soloist have his way, Svendsen was rightly proud of doing something completely other. Also, as in the First Symphony, the slow movement is an event of Brahmsian emotional weight.

The symphony is often singled out for the *italianità* of its orchestration and sheer brio. I hear more of a Mendelssohn carried north to Glinka or even the early Tchaikovsky of *Winter Daydreams*. Svendsen's orchestral imagination never stills; even in apparently conventional closes (eg in the *Scherzo*) he can conjure some unexpected combination of *pizzicato* over pedal-point. Järvi and his Bergen players sound most happy together, playing with a fluency suggestive of more joint live performances than they could possibly have had. The engineering supports them at every turn. **Mike Ashman**

Talbot

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Suite.

Fool's Paradise

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Christopher Austin

Signum © SIGCD327 (67' • DDD)



Talbot's score for Royal Ballet's first full new work since 1995

Fool's Paradise, for string orchestra, evolved from a piano trio by Joby Talbot about which we are told relatively little in the booklet. It is a hauntingly effective score in four parts, in many ways even finer than *Alice* (if less diverse in scoring). Part 1 opens with a fragile violin solo, with delicate piano backing and a cello joining in later ready to lead to Part 2, which soon becomes more expansive in every way and rhythmically increasingly volatile. Part 3 is a soliloquy, obviously derived from the opening section with its changing rhythms and tempi

but becoming increasingly passionate.

The closing, Part 4, sums up the whole, an amalgam of passion and serenity, with the piano having the last word.

But it is his ballet suite *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that has made the composer's name. He shows himself able to create danceable textures while providing a narrative flow in his music, he can create distinct musical characterisation for his principal characters, and he has a melodic gift which regularly blossoms. He also shows a piquant feeling for orchestral colour and uses a wide range of subtle percussion effects.

Of the eight excerpts from *Alice in Wonderland*, the 'Prologue' immediately introduces the minimalist style he usually favours but there is a contrasting lyrical strain too. 'The Mad Hatter's Tea Party' brings in a hint of burlesque but the portrait of 'Alice Alone' is wistfully, nostalgically romantic. 'The Croquet Match' introduces the Queen with what the composer calls a *scordatura* theme, and various characters then appear, including the Knave who dances with Alice, and the Cheshire Cat, who is depicted in the 'purring flutes and undulating lines of the high woodwinds'.

It is the White Rabbit who sets up the Courtroom for the Knave's trial with a fanfare and the Queen then dances in to a catchy tango (deliciously scored). Alice is finally drawn to the 'The Flower Garden', which is melodically the highlight of the ballet. Its striking main theme gets more boisterous (underlined by a bass tuba) when Alice dances a lively *pas de deux* with the Knave, before the impressive closing climax. This is music which, when played as sympathetically as it is here, stands up well on its own, even without the delights of the Opus Arte DVD. **Ivan March**

Tchaikovsky

Serenade for Strings, Op 48.

Souvenir de Florence, Op 70

Lausanne Camerata / Pierre Amoyal

Warner Classics © 2564 65218-2 (66' • DDD)

Tchaikovsky

Violin Concerto, Op 35^a.

Souvenir de Florence, Op 70^b

Sarah Nemtanu, ^bLuc Héry *vns* ^bSabine Toutain,

^bChristophe Gaugué *vas* ^bRaphaël Perraud, ^bJean-Luc

Bourré *vcs* ^aFrench National Orchestra / Kurt Masur

Naïve © V5325 (61' • DDD)

^aRecorded live at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris,

April 25, 2012



Nemtanu plays the Concerto, and Souvenirs from Paris and Lausanne

New recordings of Tchaikovsky's carefree and endearingly garrulous *Souvenir de Florence* –

whether in its original guise as a string sextet or transcribed for string orchestra – are always welcome and this athletic offering from the richly experienced Pierre Amoyal and his 13-strong Camerata de Lausanne certainly hits the spot. Sharing the first violin part with the young Russian Andrey Baranov (winner of the 2012 Queen Elisabeth Competition), Amoyal masterminds a dashing eloquent, uncommonly articulate rendering, with textures that are bracingly transparent and phrasing as shapely as it is affectionate (the first movement's magical second subject and slow movement's long-breathed cantilena are moulded with flexibility and imagination). By its side, the version by Sarah Nemtanu and five principals drawn from the Orchestre National de France and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France sounds altogether more conventional; ensemble is impressively tight but tension levels are a few notches lower than one might have expected from a live event. High-class alternatives from an augmented Borodin Quartet (Teldec, 1/94) and Sarah Chang and colleagues (EMI, 10/02) remain preferable.

Nemtanu makes amends with her coupling, mind you, a refreshingly discerning concert performance of the Tchaikovsky Concerto with her mentor Kurt Masur a warmly understanding partner on the rostrum. It was Masur who appointed her leader of the Orchestre National de France when she was just 21, and if the bomb-proof technique, abundant temperament and innate good taste she displays here are anything to go by, she's undoubtedly a talent to monitor. A pity the close-set sound is not terribly alluring. Amoyal's splendidly clean-limbed *Souvenir de Florence* is preceded by a no less sparky account of the masterly Serenade, with playing that is once again feisty and virtuoso. I love the snap, sinew and sweep that these intelligent artists bring to the outer movements, although some listeners may crave rather more in the way of opulence and glow (especially in the heart-tugging slow movement). We could do with a reissue of David Zinman's classic Philips recording of *Souvenir* with the Netherlands CO (6/77 – nla) but in the meantime this admirably engineered Warner Classics release will serve very nicely indeed. I should also add that from each sale of Nemtanu's Naïve CD, one euro will be donated to Amnesty International.

Andrew Achenbach

'Karajan - The Second Life' DVD

A film by Eric Schulz

DG © DVD 073 4983GH

(80' • NTSC • 16:9 • PCM stereo • 0 • s)



Eric Schulz and the recorded legacy of Herbert von Karajan

As Eric Schulz's new documentary about Herbert von Karajan is drawing to a close, a bombshell. 'I believe we have more than one life. And I'll be back, I can tell you that!' proclaims a visibly ailing Karajan. What are we supposed to make of this revelation? Has the famously messianic maestro finally succumbed to the trap of believing in his own charisma? Luckily a talking head appears on screen to reassure us that, well, Herbert often said this kind of thing and we ought not to read too much into it. I'm not so sure though. Could the next principal conductor of the BPO, post-Rattle, indeed be Karajan, death but a minor inconvenience that mustn't be allowed to stall his career?

Schulz is clearly in love with what the Karajan mythology can hand him as a filmmaker while realising that the wackier fringes of HvK lionisation need, if not exactly to be challenged, then at least acknowledged. Various former BPO musicians are wheeled out to testify that Karajan could indeed be unreasonable and obstinate. But that's where it ends. No questions asked about who he may, or may not, have hung out with during the war; the chaos when Karajan fell out with the orchestra during his last years similarly airbrushed away.

The Second Life refers, naturally, to Karajan's recorded legacy and this is where things hot up. A DG insider raises an intriguing point: Karajan's insistence on micromanaging every detail, on perfection, he says, was aimed at imbuing his recordings with timelessness. This is subsequently contradicted, not least by Karajan himself who, during a rather testy interview, says he has changed 'but records stay the same' and that's a problem. How far conductors should manipulate studio space to create idealised performances not possible in a live concert is a morally troubling issue. But there's no ambiguity about Karajan's view.

Karajan buffs will appreciate copious unseen footage; a pity though about the continuity hiccups. When the film arrives at his totemic 1982 Mahler Ninth we see Karajan conducting Mahler's Fifth; discussion of his approach to Schoenberg is overlaid with footage of *The Rite of Spring*. Bring on the second coming.

Philip Clark

'Les Ballets Russes, Vol 9'

Milhaud *Le train bleu* Sauguet *La chatte*

D Scarlatti/Tommasini *Les femmes de bonne humeur* - Suite

Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken

Kaiserslautern / Robert Reimer

Hänssler Classic © CD93 296 (74' • DDD)



Milhaud's train and Sauguet's cat for ninth Ballets Russes disc

This is Vol 9 of Hänssler Classic's survey of Ballets Russes scores and features three Diaghilev commissions. Most of us know Milhaud through works such as *Le boeuf sur le toit* and *Scaramouche* but *Le train bleu* falls outside my expectations of the composer. As a pastiche of pallid, second-rate Edwardian salon music it is spot on, a suite that would show Edward German on an off-day in a good light. It comes as no surprise to learn that Milhaud composed the score in a hurry while simultaneously fulfilling another commission (*Salade* for Massine). Unless they are, perversely, sole examples in this politely tonal score of wrong-note harmony, there are a couple of clinkers from the trumpet at 5'00" in No 6, 'Entrée de la championne de tennis'.

Vincenzo Tommasini's orchestrations of Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas are a far more attractive proposition. His once-popular suite fashioned from the score of *The Good Humoured Ladies* (1917) is usually paired with Walton's *The Wise Virgins*. I take Robert Irving's 1962 recording as the benchmark which, despite its half-century, sounds well with tempi benefiting from being a notch up from Reimer's.

The discovery (for me, at least) is *La chatte* by the forgotten Henri Sauguet (1892-1974), sometimes included as a seventh member of Les Six. Chic, economical, tuneful and unmistakably Gallic, the suite's Overture and eight movements are a delightful soufflé to accompany a story about a young man falling in love with a cat – 'a silver affair with sodomite reflexes', according to an early critic of the ballet. The playing, again, is redolent of page-turning efficiency rather than infectious enthusiasm. **Jeremy Nicholas**

'Flute Concertos'

Griffes *Poem* Ibert *Flute Concerto*

Martin Ballade Nielsen *Flute Concerto*, FS119

Thomas Jensen // South Jutland Symphony

Orchestra / Giordano Bellincampi

Danacord © DACOCD725 (56' • DDD/DSD)



Danish flautist plays concertos from Europe and America

Here is a splendid showcase for Thomas Jensen's magnetic interpretations of these four contrasted items. Nielsen's Flute Concerto may be a lesser work than his superb Clarinet Concerto but in Jensen's hands the two substantial movements hang together remarkably well. The first movement finds the flute confronted by trombone and heavy timpani, and later allotted a substantial cadenza, partly accompanied. The second-movement *Allegretto* is attractively jaunty with the trombone again interrupting, this time including a rude *glissando*.

The second item on the disc, the *Poem* by the short-lived American composer

Charles T Griffes, is a special favourite of mine, with Jensen lovingly drawing out the evocative melodic writing with its oriental flavours, ending after a big climax with the flute in the low 'chalumeau' register. The *Ballade* of Frank Martin is written for strings and piano, with a varied sequence of ideas exploiting the virtuosity of the flute, including a brief passage in waltz time and a final brisk pay-off.

The Flute Concerto of Jacques Ibert is unashamedly a display piece in a characteristic neo-classical style with the flute chattering away in the first movement, easily melodic in the central slow movement and giving in to jazzy brilliance in the *Allegro scherzando* finale, a delicious movement superbly performed here not just by Jensen but by the very able South Jutland Symphony Orchestra under Giordano Bellincampi with first-rate sound.

Edward Greenfield

'Lost Generation'

Schulhoff Concerto doppio, Op 63 WV89^a.

Flute Sonata, Op 61 WV86^b. Three Pieces, Op 5

WV5^c Tauský Coventry^c Ullmann Chamber

Symphony, Op 46a (arr Woods)^c

^{ab}Ulrike Anton fl ^{ab}Russell Ryan pf

^{ac}English Chamber Orchestra / David Parry

Gramola © 98964 (65' • DDD)



Orchestral and chamber works by victims of the Third Reich

What with the publication of Michael Haas's *Forbidden Music* (see page 90), there's hope yet for an extra boost to music by a generation that Hitler and his trans-European cohorts deemed 'degenerate'. Just how ludicrous that claim was is tellingly illustrated by this varied and absorbing programme. Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) is central to the enterprise, with two substantial works dating from the late 1920s. His Concerto for flute, piano and string orchestra with two horns (previously recorded under Israel Yinon for Koch Schwann) is a powerful piece cast along the lines of Hindemith and Martinů, the opening *Allegro* choppy and propulsive, the central *Andante* like a flute sonata with weighted interpolations from the orchestra, the finale relatively light-hearted. No wonder it was taken up by Steinberg and Monteux; and although Yinon's performance has a marginally swifter first movement, David Parry and his players suggest something altogether tougher and more relentless. As a piece it's light years removed from the 16-year-old Schulhoff's Three Pieces for string orchestra, where Grieg is the prime influence and the carefree mood suggests parallels with the lighter Wirén or Britten.

Between these two extremes comes the Flute Sonata (1927), an attractive work that harbours one or two of the Concerto's shadows but without replicating its fervent mood. British

music enthusiasts will be familiar with the figure of Vilem Tauský, whose conducting skills were so frequently aired over the BBC, but may not be aware that he could pen such a moving essay as the meditation for string orchestra *Coventry*, composed in the wake of the 1940 bombing of the city's cathedral. When interviewed later in life, Tauský was apparently amazed that any of his ill-fated compatriots were remembered, let alone performed, and it is indeed a miracle that we have Viktor Ullmann's Third String Quartet (presented here as a Chamber Symphony as arranged by Kenneth Woods) which manages a whole range of emotional responses even though it was composed while Ullmann was interred in the Theresienstadt ghetto-transit camp. A year later, in 1944, he was transferred to Auschwitz, where he was murdered.

Doesn't bear thinking about...and maybe we will be doing Ullmann a disservice by thinking about it too much. He did after all claim that, in terms of creativity, Theresienstadt helped rather than hindered him, that instead of weeping he (and his colleagues) launched headlong into work. The important thing, now, is that his music stands the test of time. So hats off to flautist Ulrike Anton, pianist Russell Ryan, the ECO and David Parry, producer Michael Haas and everyone else responsible for this well-performed programme. First-rate annotation, too. Rob Cowan

'Music in the Air'

'A History of Classical Music on Television'

A film by Reiner E Moritz

ArtHaus Music © DVD 101 640

(85' • NTSC • 16:9 • PCM stereo • 0 • s)



Now on DVD: Moritz's history of classical music on television

Reiner Moritz is among the most experienced and distinguished of filmed music producers, the ideal figure, you would have thought, to direct a documentary on the history of classical music on television. Alas, those hoping for a chronological survey of the subject will find themselves tossed about like a sweet paper on a windy street. We are presented with what feels like a scrapbook of arbitrarily chosen clips glued into its pages by someone after a long lunch. The narration (a disengaged John Hurt) fails to paper over the joins. There is no discernible narrative flow as we switch from abruptly terminated footage of New Year's Day concerts in Vienna (2011 and 1963) to an abruptly terminated excerpt of BBC TV's first broadcast (1936) – poor (uncredited) Adele Dixon barely gets to open her mouth – interpolated *in extenso* by talking heads (2012) lamenting the present state of music on television or the challenges and rewards of performing on television. Some of the

archive footage, to be fair, has rarely been seen (Sargent and Constance Shacklock in 1957, Poulenc playing Satie in 1963, Messiaen rehearsing in 1977) and the comparative clips of *Owen Wingrave* in 1970 and 2001 are telling, Karajan's important contribution to the medium less so.

Popular music, despite the film's title, makes an appearance – all 3'42" of it – represented by The Pink Floyd [*sic*] and Thelonious Monk (why?). But neither the history nor the technological developments of this fascinating subject are handled anything like adequately. The film is, in short, a mess. It's a subject for someone to return to – with a bigger budget and a more clear, objective view of it.

Jeremy Nicholas

'Neapolitan Flute Concertos, Vol 2'

Cecere Flute Concerto in G Geraso Flute Concerto

in G Palella (attrib) Flute Concerto in G Papa

Flute Concerto in D Perez Flute Concerto in G

Carlo Ipata *baroque* fl Auser Musici

Hyperion © CDA67884 (62' • DDD)



Second disc in Ipata's survey of Baroque Italian concertos

This sequel continues flautist Carlo Ipata's probing exploration of the remotest corners of early-18th-century Neapolitan repertoire. None of the composers are household names, even if your household is seriously keen on Italian Baroque music. Stefano Aresi's booklet-note attempts to convey how this music conjures up the atmosphere of private concerts in aristocratic palaces but I find it hard to believe that quite so much G major would have been performed in one sitting – nor five flute concertos in a row. Nevertheless, the small chamber ensemble Auser Musici play quick music with brio, slower movements have a graceful lyrical sweep and Ipata's flute-playing is always shapely; there's no disputing the easy charm of these skilfully crafted concertos.

Nothing at all is known of 'Sig.r Geraso' and very little about Francesco Papa, but Davide Perez was a capable contemporary of Pergolesi and his concerto opens with a nuanced *Cantabile* movement, whereas the *Largo* is softly eloquent. There is a jauntier atmosphere in the concerto by comic opera composer Carlo Cecere. The final concerto on the disc appears under the name of Antonio Palella but in some sources it is attributed to Hasse (the German-born composer shot to fame in Naples during the 1720s); Auser Musici and Ipata give a vibrant performance. Some might assume this recording's appeal might be limited to obsessive dedicatees of the Baroque flute but these finely judged performances of consistently well-wrought compositions offer wider charms.

David Vickers

GRAMOPHONE *Collector*

REED ROUND-UP

David Patrick Stearns listens to a recent crop of recordings of new (and nearly new) music for oboe, bassoon and saxophone



Bassoonist Gustavo Núñez records with colleagues from the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

Newly composed, rediscovered and transcribed music for woodwind – positive additions to the concert repertoire – is to be heard on this recent flood of woodwind discs. Maybe the world wasn't crying out for *Pictures at an Exhibition* for piano and saxophone (which has surfaced recently) but there is much ingratiating lyricism in the saxophone, oboe and bassoon works here.

Part of the fascination lies in where these instruments will take the composer. The typical heroic concerto model doesn't work so well; extended soliloquies do. In the most important of these discs, Kalevi Aho plunges his 2007 Oboe Concerto into the world of Middle Eastern music that could easily have conjured snake-charming clichés but is nothing so superficial in a five-movement work whose orchestra includes darabuka and djembe, oboe d'amore and heckelphone. Aho starts with the oboe holding forth with call-to-prayer exoticism, progressing into darker harmonies that suggest a dangerous journey into the unknown. No less important is the attractively pugnacious 2010 *Solo IX* and the sprawling 1985 Oboe Sonata, which obsessively quotes Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony and lapses into Schnittke-esque grotesquery. Oboist **Piet Van Bockstal** sails through some huge technical challenges.

Aho sets such a high standard that others perhaps suffer unfair comparisons. For all the neo-classical charm afforded to bassoonist **Gustavo Núñez** in works by Kees Olthuis and

Jaurés Lamarque Pons, the 'name' composers carry the disc. Villa-Lobos's *Ciranda das sete notas*, based on Brazilian dance customs of women waiting for their seafaring husbands to return, is alternately playful, searching and unconventionally melodic, ending with eloquent inconclusiveness (the wives are still waiting, it seems). Greater challenges posed are more handily met in Sofia Gubaidulina's Concerto for bassoon and low strings, a 1975 work that can bewilder even those sympathetically acquainted with more recent (and more cogent) works.

With the precedent of light-classical discs by Branford Marsalis and Richard Stoltzman, some of the discs seek mainly to be pleasant, though never in the same ways. Czech oboe virtuoso **Vilém Veverka** is wonderful company in a low-key disc of unaccompanied oboe, Telemann's Twelve Fantasias feeling a bit like Bach's sonatas for unaccompanied string instruments but with less rigour. Britten's *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* shows Veverka's full range of colour and even spatial effects, his tone accentuated by the acoustics of Prague's St Francis of Assisi Church.

'The Coral Sea' by the **McKenzie Sawers Duo** has some ruggedly individualistic composers all unified by the long-breathed phrases possible on the saxophone. Even Graham Fitkin is far less rhythmically obsessed than usual. While Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Two Memorials* for unaccompanied sax is obviously not a major work, it's worth hearing for its elegiac emotional distillation.

The title-piece by Gabriel Jackson has rhapsodic saxophone writing over a hauntingly repetitive piano. Gavin Bryars's *Allegrasco* is somewhat rambling and episodic but is never without good musical scenery.

Rebellion against string hegemony is the apparent subtext of the **Swedish Wind Ensemble's** disc, which has an excellent performance of Milhaud's *La création du monde* as window dressing followed by middle-of-the-road voices such as Paul Creston (*Alto Saxophone Concerto*) and John Williams (*Catch Me If You Can* suite) but in alternate versions or arrangements for wind band. Neither work I'd want to hear repeatedly, though there's plenty of substance in Piazzolla's *Escualo* and especially in Anders Emilsson's 2006 *Salute the Band*, which throws in everything but the kitchen sink. Roger Boutry's *Divertimento* for alto saxophone is an urbane delight, sounding remarkably like Sondheim at his most tuneful and rhythmically restless.

One hates to think of these wonderful players scouring libraries for repertoire and taking whatever they can find. But that does seem to be the case with some of 'British Music for Oboe and Strings', a selection of concertos that are memorable in perhaps one out of their three movements. John Joubert's Oboe Concerto is perfectly pleasant until the finale, which builds to an arresting moment when multiple emotions (ecstasy, regret, etc) are expressed intensely and simultaneously. You wouldn't want to miss it. In works by Leighton, John McCabe and Britten, we're comfortably lodged back in Pleasantville (or, in the case of McCabe's Oboe Concerto, Nielsenville), though in the capable hands of George Vass's Orchestra Nova and oboist **Jinny Shaw**. **G**

THE RECORDINGS



Aho Ob Conc. Solo IX. Ob Son
Van Bockstal; Lahti SO / Brabbins
BIS (P) 92. BIS1876



Various Cpsrs Capriccio
Núñez; RCO / Spanjaard, Olthuis
Channel Classics (P) 92. CCSSA33813



Britten Metamorphoses
Telemann Fantasias **Veverka**
Supraphon (P) 92. SU4121-2



Various Cpsrs The Coral Sea
McKenzie Sawers Duo
Delphian (P) 92. DCD34121



Various Cpsrs Création du monde
Delangle; Swedish Wind Ens / C Lindberg
BIS (P) 92. BIS1640



Various Cpsrs British Music for Ob & Stgs
Shaw; Orch Nova / Vass
Guild (P) 92. GMCD7383



Mike Ashman on a quartet's pairing of Schubert with Grieg:
'Death is all around, which not only fits the Schubert but gives the Grieg a kick towards the psychological' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 66**



Harriet Smith on cello works by Mendelssohn on Coviello:
'A cellist with a plangent tone and a pianist amply capable of bringing off Mendelssohn's fingery writing' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 67**

Arnalds

Sudden Throw. Brim. For Now I Am Winter.
A Stutter. Words of Amber. Reclaim. Hands Be Still.
Only the Winds. Old Skin. We (Too) Shall Rest.
This Place Was a Shelter. Carry Me Anew
Ólafur Arnalds *insts and guests*
Mercury © 481 0150 (48' • DDD)
Also available on ● 481 0178



Muhly on board for Icelander Arnalds's fourth album

Sometimes a recording will come along which possesses such vitality and strength of purpose that it forces one to look at contemporary music from altogether new perspectives. Ólafur Arnalds's 'For Now I Am Winter' is such a recording.

Arnalds's fourth solo album is striking, unique and original. Yet in certain respects nothing 'new' is really presented here. The Icelandic composer and former rock metal drummer's eclectic mix of ambient, electronica and post-minimalism, coupled with searing string lines and techno-inspired loops and beats, sounds familiar. Yet Arnalds manages – quite effortlessly at times – to synthesise such disparate elements into an album that functions effectively on a number of different levels. The real achievement of 'For Now I Am Winter' lies in the strength of its musical ideas, which are powerful enough to support the album's complex polystylistic structure. This is an album that sounds 'composed' in the classical sense, despite its shiny pop veneer. The opening two tracks, 'Sudden Throw' and 'Brim', illustrate the point: Arnalds's thematic invention and temporal shaping provide continuity and coherence, despite the sudden shifts in mood and emphasis.

The real ace in Arnalds's hand is the haunting voice of Arnór Dan, however, as heard most effectively and memorably on the single 'Old Skin' and the title-track. Rock in its resonance and directness, folk-like in timbre and gesture, classical in lyrical construction, Dan's voice – like Arnalds's music – defies categorisation. Production values are also excellent, as are Nico Muhly's animated, filmic orchestrations. The yearning, broody music of 'For Now I Am Winter' may be too desolate

for some but nevertheless yields rich and seductive soundscapes. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Beethoven • Shostakovich

Beethoven String Quartet No 8, Op 59 No 2
Shostakovich String Quartet No 3, Op 73
Valentin Berlinsky Quartet
Avie © AV2273 (71' • DDD)



Berlinsky Quartet's composer-pairing project continues

After last year's well-received volume of Shostakovich's Seventh and Eighth Quartets and the first 'Rasumovsky' Quartet of Beethoven, the Valentin Berlinsky Quartet is hopefully setting about establishing a yearly tradition of releasing a Shostakovich-Beethoven pairing with this second offering. Like their first, this volume includes a 'Rasumovsky' and, also like their first, manages to make distinct the vastly contrasting characters of both composers without detracting from either as the dominant figure that each was within his own period. More than that, the clever choice to combine these particular works – some of Beethoven's most statuesquely emotional chamber music (not to mention the Russian connection) and the Third Shostakovich Quartet, written after the ravages of the Second World War and immediately after his Ninth Symphony was censored – creates a recital disc that is more of a narrative than a programme emphasising the greatness of both works.

That the playing is energetic and insightful, and combines flawless tuning and blend into a sound world that is like the aural equivalent of muted, resigned Constructivism for the Shostakovich but bell-clear, majestic neo-classicism for the Beethoven, is a wonderful way to finesse the conception of this series. All in all, the Berlinskys make such a convincing argument for these two composers as obvious bedfellows that it's hard to understand why this series hasn't been undertaken countless times before. **Caroline Gill**

Biber

Mystery (Rosary) Sonatas and Passacaglia
Annegret Siedel *vi* **Bell'arte Salzburg**
Berlin Classics © © 0300531BC (119' • DDD)



German violinist joined by ensemble for Biber's sonatas

There are now over a dozen recordings of Biber's superb meditative cycle of 15 violin sonatas and a passacaglia linked to the 'mysteries' of the Rosary. Almost all are from the last 20 years and a pleasing diversity of approaches has grown up with them, with players combining the pictorial-dramatic and reflective approaches in varying proportions, assembling continuo sections colourful and austere, and facing the stresses and strains of Biber's extreme *scordatura* habit either by using several different violins or toughing it out on one groaning instrument. Often the profound air of these works prompts special presentation; facsimiles of the cameo images from Biber's manuscript score abound; Pavlo Beznosiuk (Avie, 7/04) interleaves his sonatas with theological readings from Timothy West; Julia Wedman's impressive recent recording (Dorian, 7/11) reproduces devotional paintings from the meeting hall of the Salzburg Rosary confraternity; and most of the violinists are moved to offer their own thoughts on the meaning and methods of these extraordinary pieces.

It is the first of these sets of interpretative differences that counts most, of course; although they use standard forms such as dances, ground basses and variations, these are works associated with familiar events in the life of Jesus and Mary, and require a firm vision of how to represent them. So while for the record Annegret Siedel uses nine violins and a continuo section of three players on six different instruments, it is her decision to focus on the music's 'process of intensification and withdrawal' that defines her readings. These are performances firmly in the meditative camp, seeking to move not by grabbing the lapels but through concentration and reflection – give yourself up to the music, they seem to say, and meaning will follow.

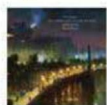
There are nods to the descriptive – 'The Scourging' takes on a thorny, metallic tone; the rushing wind is unmistakable at the beginning of 'Gift of the Spirit' – but the tone is predominantly sombre and reverential rather

than larger-than-life excitable. The expressive results are mixed: 'The Way of the Cross' is noble and stoic, and 'The Crucifixion' strikes a good balance between the nails being hammered at the start and the darkening intensification of mood in the variations that follow; yet 'The Resurrection' is a curiously muted celebration and 'Agony in the Garden' a rather perfunctory lament. It's all a bit hit-and-miss in fact, though there is no doubting its integrity. And the solo Passacaglia at the end is a smooth and light caress. **Lindsay Kemp**

Bowen



'The Complete Works for Violin and Piano'
Violin Sonatas - Op 7; Op 112. Allegretto, Op 105.
Suite, Op 28. Melody for the G String, Op 47.
Phantasie, Op 34. Song. Bolero. Melody. Albumleaf.
Romance. Serenade. Valse harmonique
Chloë Hanslip *vn* **Danny Driver** *pf*
Hyperion © ② CDA67991/2 (117 • DDD)



Driver champions Bowen violin works with Hanslip

We can thank Danny Driver for researching and devising this latest addition to Hyperion's absorbing York Bowen series. The programme spans nearly half a century, from the Romance in D flat major of 1900 to a pair of highly attractive miniatures – *Song* and *Bolero* – that were both composed on the same day, January 22, 1949. Some 43 years separate the two sonatas, the earlier specimen an unpublished piece in B minor from 1902 comprising just two contrasting movements – and which may conceivably have started out as a bigger canvas. Its E minor companion from 1945, on the other hand, is a mature work of striking concision and self-confidence, brimful of memorable, red-blooded invention. Both the Suite in D minor (premiered by Fritz Kreisler with the 25-year-old composer at the piano in 1909) and *Phantasie* from 1911 (commissioned by WW Cobbett) evince a comparable idiomatic mastery and fecund lyrical gift. Of the remaining six items I was particularly smitten with the 1917 diptych of *Serenade* and *Valse harmonique*, the latter a captivating morsel of exquisite grace and capricious charm.

Of course, some of this material we've had before on rival compilations from Dutton Epoch and EM Records but there's a wholly infectious conviction, spontaneity and panache about these superbly accomplished performances that lend them special distinction. Chloë Hanslip plays with the most enviably sweet and subtly variegated tone throughout and she forms an outstandingly compelling partnership with Danny Driver, whose irreproachably eager and stylish pianism is a joy to encounter. Production values, too, are as superior as one might expect from the the experienced Keener/Eadon team – and a final



Sweet and subtle: Chloë Hanslip explores York Bowen

word of praise for Francis Pott's thoughtful notes. **Andrew Achenbach**

Corp

'String, Paper, Wood'
String Quartet No 3^a. The Yellow Wallpaper^b.
Clarinet Quintet, 'Crawhall'^c
Maggini Quartet with ^bRebecca de Pont Davies *mez*
^cAndrew Marriner *cl* ^bJohn Tattersdill *db*
Stone Records © 5060192 780246 (66' • DDD)



Quartet, quintet and cantata on Stone's latest Corp disc

Ronald Corp's first two string quartets appeared on Naxos in 2011, played by the Maggini Quartet. The first item on this new disc adds Corp's Third String Quartet, again superbly played by the Maggini, relishing the original textures that Corp devises for the four instruments. In three compact movements, this quartet is far less expansive than its predecessors, with the central slow movement including a brief *scherzando* central section, leading to the light, jaunty finale which Corp intends to echo the finales in many of Haydn's string quartets.

The gimmicky title of the disc, 'String, Paper, Wood', is designed to cover the three contrasting works involved: string for the

quartet, wood for the Clarinet Quintet (the third work) and paper for the song-cycle which comes in the middle. *The Yellow Wallpaper* is a cantata in six movements for mezzo-soprano (Rebecca de Pont Davies) and string quartet based on a short story by the Victorian feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman. With its sharp rhythms, it follows the emotions of an ill woman who feels imprisoned in a room with yellow wallpaper. Again, Corp's writing is fluent in responding to each prose passage: illustrative music with the quartet simply backing up the voice.

The Clarinet Quintet is designed as a portrait of the 19th-century polymath Joseph Crawhall. It is in four compact movements following a conventional pattern, always exploiting the special qualities of the clarinet. The jaunty *scherzo* is capped by a vigorous finale, sharply rhythmic to make an emphatic conclusion. Associated with the portrait of Crawhall are the delightful *faux naïf* illustrations in a jolly medieval style that decorate the booklet.

Andrew Marriner is the brilliant clarinetist, well matched by the Maggini Quartet, as ever giving a dedicated performance. Nicely intimate sound, recorded in the Church of St Silas, Kentish Town.

Edward Greenfield

Dvořák · Smetana

Dvořák String Quartet No 12, 'American', Op 96

B179 Smetana String Quartet No 1, 'From My Life'

Tokyo Quartet

Harmonia Mundi (F) (S) HMU80 7429 (53' • DDD/DSD)



Farewell recording from the disbanding Tokyo Quartet

Years ago I was gently castigated by a colleague for bemoaning the abundance of Beethoven symphony recordings at a time when there was still so much good music yet to be recorded, or at least to be recorded more than once. Seeing this valedictory CD by the Tokyo Quartet of the two most popular chamber works by their respective composers prompted a similar reaction. And yet, the actual listening process confirmed what my colleague had said to me regarding Beethoven: that there's always room for another recording if it enriches our experience of a particular work, or yields some special insights.

That is certainly the case here, from the fruity viola exclamations at the beginning of the *American* Quartet to the painful resignation at the close of Smetana's First. The beauty of these performances lies in their immaculate voicing, their keen sense of tonal perspective and the way the quartet leans this way or that at the behest of a particular phrase or gesture. Neither effete nor especially idiomatic, they promote a rare musical intelligence – emotional intelligence, too – much as you'll hear from the way they ease the tempo for the second subject in the *American* Quartet's first movement. The Tokyo Quartet's ability to change complexion, sound-wise, registers in the movement's development section, which darkens significantly. Sensitive voicing again pays high dividends at the start of the *Lento* and the *scherzo*'s eerie second subject is played with a winning trance-like quality.

Smetana's First enjoys some memorably rich textures, the restless sense of foreboding present right from the opening bars. In the polka second movement one or two chords aren't absolutely true, intonation-wise (ie the held chord at around 0'42" on tr 6), but that's being very picky and the rustic spirit is well captured. The *Largo* is intensely lyrical, the finale admirably light on its feet, gaining in excitement before the dramatic moment when a sustained harmonic E (tr 8, 3'32") signals the fateful ringing in Smetana's ears and his oncoming deafness. For the most part, it's an excellent performance though for that extra quota of drama I'd bear in mind the Smetana Quartet live (BBC Legends). As to the *American*, aside from the complete Dvořák quartet sets by the Panocha and Prague Quartets, I'd rate the Vogler and the Pavel Haas Quartets on an equal footing with the Tokyo, though the many positive qualities

noted above are more than enough to justify investing in this beautifully recorded new release. **Rob Cowan**

Smetana – selected comparison:

Smetana Qt (BBC) BBCL4137-2

Dvořák – selected comparisons:

Panocha Qt (2/96) (SUPR) SU0179-2

Pavel Haas Qt (12/10) (SUPR) SU4038-2

Vogler Qt (2/13) (CPO) CPO777 624-2

Prague Qt (DG) 463 165-2GB9

Grieg · Schubert

'The Schubert Connection'

Grieg String Quartet, Op 27 **Schubert** String

Quartet No 14, 'Death and the Maiden', D810

Oslo Quartet

2L (F) (S) (D) 2L0935ABD (70' • DDD/DSD • DTS-HD MA 24-bit 192kHz 5.1 & LPCM stereo)



Norwegian quartet pose Schubert-Grieg connection

In a booklet-note for this elegant release, Øystein Sonstad, the Quartet's cellist, argues for Schubert's D810 being the inspiration behind Grieg's Op 27 (a work itself normally cited as a significant influence on Debussy's Quartet). The common ground he lists includes the state of mental and professional health of both composers at the time of writing (poor to the point of obsession with death), drawing thematic and musical material from an own existing song and making use of leitmotif-like structures to give unity to the quartets. There's no proof yet that Grieg even knew Schubert's work but Sonstad's arguments are credible – and the Quartet's own website promises more on the subject soon. It's a typical venture from an ensemble that, at the time of writing, is touring part of Norway with three singers in their own version of Puccini's *Tosca*.

Caught in what we can now begin to term characteristically probing Lindberg Lyd sound (I heard mostly the 5.1 DTS-HD Master) are fine, spiky versions of each quartet. The instrumental layout differs for each one, violins in the middle of the group for the Schubert. Obviously the recordings were made with awareness of the theory behind the project. There's much dark, moody colouring: death is indeed all around, an interpretation which not only naturally fits the Schubert but gives the Grieg, especially its tarantella-like finale, an equally relevant kick towards the modern and psychological. Nothing cosy here, despite the folksong-like Trio.

There are, of course, any number of significant rival versions of the Schubert (fewer of the Grieg) but this is a release to be considered *sui generis* in terms of both the intentionally paired repertoire (like a given concert programme) and the sheer clarity of the sound. Recommended.

Mike Ashman

Higdon

An Exaltation of Larks. Scenes from the Poet's Dreams^a. Light Refracted^b

Lark Quartet with ^bTodd Palmer *cl*

^aGary Graffman, ^bBlair McMillen *pf*

Bridge (C) BRIDGE9379 (55' • DDD)



The Lark play quartets by the Philadelphia composer

In terms of her profile in the UK, Jennifer Higdon is best known for such high-octave pieces as the Percussion Concerto which has become a favourite with younger soloists. The present disc focuses on the more inward – though not thereby introspective – side of her thinking, with three pieces either written for or championed by the Lark Quartet. Of these, *An Exaltation of Larks* (2005) is all about integration – drawing its several gently contrasting sections into a continuous span whose dextrously contrapuntal textures and underlying 'ecstatic lyricism' recall the early music of Tippett in manner if not in substance. *Light Refracted* (2002) adopts a different strategy in which the image of the title is conveyed by two distinct movements: the 'Inward' process characterised by ruminative and eloquently sustained music, the 'Outward' process represented by compact and vigorous music that does not so much balance as cancel out its predecessor.

Arguably the finest piece is *Scenes from the Poet's Dreams* (1999), in which the notional 'dreamer' of the title (who may or may not be embodied by the piano) moves from a deftly agile prelude, via a leisurely evocative intermezzo and vividly onomatopoeic *scherzo*, to a cumulatively expressive nocturne and an energetically assertive rondo. This is evocative and engaging music, with some deft left-hand pianism from Gary Graffman and a dedicated response from the Lark. It sets the seal on a disc which, with its spacious sound as well as pertinent booklet-notes, finds Higdon at her most resourceful. **Richard Whitehouse**

Kissine

Barcarola^a. Between Two Waves^b

Duo (after Osip Mandelstam)^c

^aGidon Kremer *vn* ^cDaniil Grishin *va*

^cGiedrė Dirvanauskaitė *vc*

^bAndrius Žlabys *pf* ^aAndrei Pushkarev *perc*

^{ab}Kremerata Baltica / Roman Kofman

ECM New Series (C) 481 0104 (68' • DDD)



Kremer and co explore Kissine's brand of minimalism

Like Giya Kancheli, his stablemate at ECM, Victor Kissine now lives and works in Belgium, in his case since 1990. Born in Leningrad and a one-time pupil of Tishchenko, his music falls firmly within the ambit of trance-like minimalism that has become one of ECM's



Unravelling Schnittke: the Molinari Quartet (whose first disc of the composer's music was named a Gramophone Choice) release a second Schnittke recording

main specialities. His piano trio *Zerkalo* ('The Mirror') made an attractive if not especially individual filler to Kremer and friends' recent recording of the Tchaikovsky Trio (8/11). Like *Zerkalo*, each work on the new disc lasts between 20 and 25 minutes, and each shares similar pros and cons.

The pros are mainly the beguiling surface sonorities, recognisably drawn from the worlds of George Crumb and Silvestrov with shades of Gubaidulina in the *Duo* and of Schnittke in the *Barcarola*. The linking ideas, according to the composer, are the watery topography of St Petersburg and variously disguised references to JS Bach. Each piece comes with associated poetic images (TS Eliot in *Between Two Waves*, Osip Mandelstam in the *Duo* and Joseph Brodsky in the *Barcarola*).

The cons are that no sensibility emerges of comparable distinctiveness to any of the above-mentioned figures, and that each piece sags well before its halfway point. Perhaps the *Duo*, with its 'voiceless choir' invoked by the cello bowed vertically, would be more gripping with the visual element added. Certainly the sharper edges of parts of the *Barcarola* give more to latch on to, but here too the habitual trills, flutters and tinkles eventually lose their allure.

Maybe some ears will detect a stronger personality in this music than I am able to thus far. At the very least everything here is beautifully played and recorded, and anyone interested in the music of the post-Soviet diaspora will find much to ponder. **David Fanning**

Mendelssohn

Cello Sonatas - No 1, Op 45; No 2, Op 58. Variations concertantes, Op 17. Song Without Words, Op 109

Laura Buruiana vc **Ferenc Vizi** pf
Coviello © COV51304 (62' • DDD)



Bonucci Competition-winner Buruiana plays Mendelssohn

A few months ago I reviewed two new discs of Mendelssohn's cello music (12/12). Ultimately, neither Luca Fiorentini (Brilliant Classics) nor Gary Hoffman (La Dolce Volta) had much to say, but that certainly isn't true of this new disc from the Romanian duo of Laura Buruiana and Ferenc Vizi. Here we have a cellist with a particularly plangent tone and a pianist amply capable of bringing off Mendelssohn's fingery, virtuoso writing.

These qualities are well demonstrated in such passages as the finale of the Second Sonata, which they take at a daring lick but without losing any clarity. In fact they give Isserlis and Tan a run for their money, even though the latter has the technical advantage of a shallower-toned fortepiano. But for a truly sparky reading, Maisky and Tiempo remain unsurpassed here. In the soliloquy of the same sonata's *Adagio*, Vizi sets a more flowing tempo than Huw Watkins or Tiempo and Buruiana reacts with ardently soulful playing. The First Sonata is also well judged, though they are less exultant than some, particularly at the *assai animato* marking in the finale, with its outburst of dotted rhythms: the Watkins brothers are particularly persuasive here.

In the *Variations concertantes* there's a sensitive interplay between the two musicians, though there are moments where the cellist is slightly drowned out. But perhaps the ultimate test of any Mendelssohn performance is to be

found not in the virtuoso pages but in the more inward ones. In the ravishing *Lied ohne Worte*, Buruiana and Vizi choose a tempo closer to the spacious Isserlis and Tan than to the faster Watkins siblings. But Isserlis proves a hard act to follow, finding as he does much to say about every single phrase and turning what can be merely charming into a profound meditation.

Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons – coupled as above:

Isserlis, Tan (3/95) (RCA) 09026 62553-2

Maisky, Tiempo (A/02) (DG) 471 566-2GH

P & H Watkins (12/11) (CHAN) CHAN10701

Schnittke

'Chamber Music, Vol 2'

String Trio. Piano Quartet. Piano Quintet

Molinari Quartet with **Marcin Swoboda** va

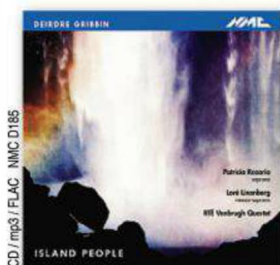
Louise Bessette pf

ATMA Classique © ACD2 2669 (60' • DDD)



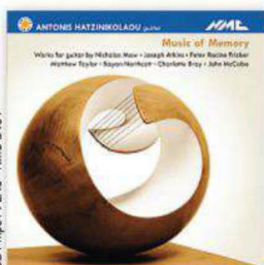
Second Schnittke disc from Canadian Molinari Quartet

Soon enough we sail towards the familiar, motoric minor-toned triads, curiously reminiscent of Philip Glass but actually Old Europe: Schubert, Mahler, Berg. Schnittke's String Trio is a memory work, a 1985 commission designed to commemorate the centenary of Berg's birth, where memories hallucinate and it transpires that the familiar and unfamiliar are interchangeable. Schnittke's triads contrive a coming together, a universal point of reference until, thinking back, you realise all those whispered, broken chorales that preceded it were extracted from the melodic inclines of 'Happy birthday to you'. That any



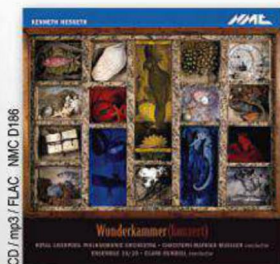
CD / mp3 / FLAC NMC D185

DEIRDRE GRIBBIN: ISLAND PEOPLE
Patricia Rozario · Loré Lixenberg
RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet · Mark O'Keefe



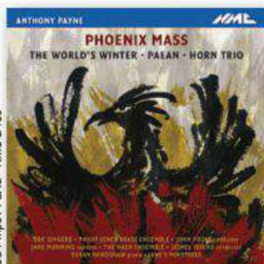
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MUSIC OF MEMORY: New works
by John McCabe, Nicholas Maw,
Charlotte Bray and others
Antonis Hatzinikolaou, guitar



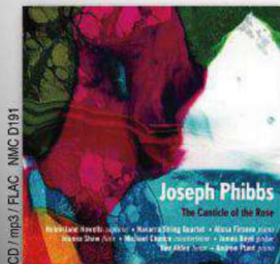
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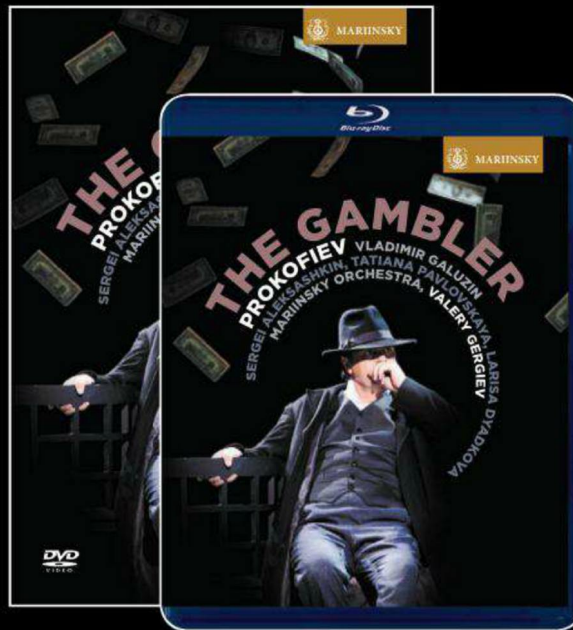
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group could play this music better than the Montreal-based Quatuor Molinari is inconceivable. They take a line, have an angle. 'Happy birthday to you' is no wry skit, no postmodern prank. Schnittke squeezes all the kindly associations away. Haunted by its own distorted presence, a faded glory caricature, it's a bitter pill refused any artificial sweetener by Quatuor Molinari. Their perspective is stark and unnerving. Mozartian minuet figurations emerge not as comfort listening but, like all Schnittke's markers, are in freefall disintegration.

Their performance of Schnittke's Piano Quintet, with Canadian pianist Louise Bessette, highlights another asset, the scarred, scorched-earth temperament of their base sonic palette. Misrepresenting this piece, composed in memory of Schnittke's mother, as a Viennese waltz dances by, as whimsy or resolved closure is too easy. Quatuor Molinari's performance is cooled by death. Notes ache. Tonal cadences are disorientated. The quartet take Schnittke at his word and never has his Piano Quintet felt like such the masterwork. His briefer Piano Quartet (1988), assembled around fragments of Mahler, establishes the mood music and puts these other works in their aesthetic and cultural context. **Philip Clark**

'In Search of the Miraculous'

Abou Khalil Dreams of a Dying City^a **Cleary** Chaconne^b **Hovhannes** To Hiroshige's Cat^b **Say** Black Earth^b. Princess of Lykia^c **Sharafyan** Ter, vor, i mej le-rinn (Lord who makes the spring run from the mountain stones)^d. **Tsov Kentsaghuis** (The sea of our life is troubling me...)^d **Surman** Leylek Geldi^a. Mimosa^a

^bElisaveta Blumina *pf* ^cJohn Feeley, ^dPavlos Kanellakis *gtrs* ^eHilliard Ensemble; ^fEQ Ensemble
Louth Contemporary Music Society (M) LCMS1301
(63' • DDD)



Fifth recording project from the cult Irish music promoter

The Louth Contemporary Music Society continues to explore and unearth hidden and often unclassifiable gems from the contemporary music repertoire on its latest release, 'In Search of the Miraculous'. The title takes its inspiration from Armenian-born mystic George Gurdjieff (1866-1949). Gurdjieff developed a holistic mind-body theory in his writings called 'the Fourth Way', based on years of travelling and studying Eastern religion and spirituality. 'In Search of the Miraculous' presents a kind of musical Fourth Way by drawing together East and West, experimental and avant-garde, ambient, minimalist and improvisational traditions.

With such a mix of styles on display, it's maybe no surprise that not every piece strikes the right chord, but the hits are greater than

the misses. Fazil Say's popular *Black Earth* resorts at times to clichéd neo-romantic sweeps but starts and ends evocatively by imitating the sound of the Turkish lute-like saz on muted piano strings. Elisaveta Blumina offers a more measured performance than Say's here, and also pulls off an excellent performance of a Chaconne by Siobhán Cleary. Cleary's composition is a compelling study in stasis and movement, while oud virtuoso Rabih Abou Khalil's *Dreams of a Dying City* – a 13-minute 'improvisation' on a 14-beat ground bass – seems less certain of the direction it's taking. Weird sub-bass dissonances are heard on Armenian composer Vache Sharafyan's *Tsov Kentsaghuis* for voices and tape, performed by the ubiquitous Hilliard Ensemble, while the layered interlocking patterns in English saxophonist John Surman's Eastern-tinged *Leylek Geldi* provides a lighter touch to conclude proceedings. If a musical Fourth Way isn't charted on 'In Search of the Miraculous', it's certainly worth exploring. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

'Baroque'

Bjarnason Sleep Variations **Corley** Tristan Da Cunha **Greenstein** In Teaching Others We Teach Ourselves **Mazzoli** Tooth and Nail **Muhly** Etude 3 **Worden** From the Invisible to the Visible
Nadia Sirota *kybds/org/vn/va* with
James McVinnie *org* **Frank Aarnink** *perc* **Paul Corley**,
Paul Evans, **Missy Mazzoli**, **Valgeir Sigurdsson** *elec*
Valgeir Sigurdsson *synth* **Daniel Bjarnason** *synth/v*
kybds/perc **James McVinnie** *kybds*
Bedroom Community (B) HVALUR17 (52' • DDD)



Intricate violin exploration from genre-crossing player

With a CV that takes in such new music luminaries as the chamber group Alarm Will Sound and the bands Arcade Fire and Grizzly Bear, violinist Nadia Sirota is evidently a musician of no mean range and versatility. Her second album for Bedroom Community looks to the Baroque in various manifestations. Judd Greenstein focuses on the interaction between solo and *tutti* playing but the premise holds more potential than its indebtedness to Reich's ensemble pieces from the mid-1980s suggests, while Shara Worden's discreet decoration of modally inflected harmonies might have made the mid-1970s Brian Eno blush. Missy Mazzoli attempts something with rather more impetus and substance, which for all its overall unfolding feels contrived rather than organic, before Nico Muhly offers a study in rhythmic precision that engages without the disparity between violin and electric keyboard seeming more than the sum of its parts.

Much the best on offer here is still to come. Paul Corley amasses a texture of increasing expressive ambiguity and dark-hued eloquence in which the violin yet remains central to the

music's subtly layered evolution, while Daniel Bjarnason conjures a veritable orchestra out of the instrument's overdubs which in themselves are much more 'variations' than any thematically derived source. It makes an evocative and atmospheric conclusion to an evidently uneven disc, which might have gained from a less claustrophobic sound balance than is consistently the case here – though this is no doubt what the composers and Sirota intended. A release that absorbs and frustrates in equal measure. **Richard Whitehouse**

'Dreams & Prayers'

Golijov The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind
O'Leary Soundshapes II **N Roth** Clarinet Quintet
Paul Roe *cl/bcl* **Contempo** Quartet
Quartz (E) QTZ2097 (65' • DDD)



Contemporary quintets anchored by Roe's clarinet

It is perhaps surprising that few contemporary composers have taken advantage of the clarinet quintet's rich potential. The three recent works contained on this disc suggests that there is still a lot of musical mileage left in this relatively unexplored medium. Direct comparison with Mozart and Brahms may be unfair in the case of Osvaldo Golijov's *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*, Jane O'Leary's *Soundshapes II* and Nick Roth's Clarinet Quintet: none bears any direct relationship to past classical models.

Golijov's *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind* is 'programmatic' on a number of levels. Based on the life of the eponymous 12th-century rabbi, its five-movement design also rather ambitiously depicts the various languages spoken throughout history by the Jewish people: Aramaic, Yiddish and Hebrew. If this suggests a rather dry quasi-philological exercise, then Golijov's music is anything but boring, shifting unpredictably from meditative stasis to dynamic dance-like moments in the second and third movements. The third is based on an earlier piece and the impression is of a rather piecemeal, diffuse work.

Nick Roth's single-movement Quintet for klezmer clarinet and bass clarinet is, on the contrary, fiercely focused, once it gets going. Based on a theme and variations, it shares with Golijov's quintet an attempt to explore the character and identity of the Jewish people, and makes effective contrasts between edgy, occasionally dissonant string passages and slowly evolving lines in the clarinet. O'Leary's more abstract *Soundshapes II* also pits solo clarinet against ensemble, although the piece becomes at times a somewhat arid exercise in sonic exploration. None of this is really helped by a dry and somewhat lifeless acoustic, although clarinetist Paul Roe and the Contempo Quartet are impressive throughout.

Pwyll ap Siôn



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The voice of the flute: Adam Walker records for Opus Arte at Potton Hall, Suffolk

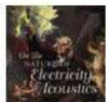
'On the Nature of Electricity & Acoustics'

Electro-acoustic music from Ireland by

Enda Bates, Linda Buckley, Cathal Coughlan, Pat Daly, Donnacha Dennehy, Vincent Doherty, Alex Dowling, Roger Doyle, Richard G Evans, Daniel Figgis, Trevor Knight, Brian Ó hUiginn, Ian Wilson, A=Apple, Amoebazoid, Deep Burial, Education, Melodica Deathship, Operating Theatre, Princess Tynymeat, Spectac, Schroeder's Cat and Sunken Foal

Curated by **Daniel Figgis**

Heresy © HERESYO10 (71' • DDD)



Heresy's boss curates electro retrospective

Folk reel to tape reel, 'On the Nature of Electricity & Acoustics' charts 35 years of Irish electro-acoustic music, from pioneering Irish electronic composer Roger Doyle to younger pretenders like Ian Wilson, Linda Buckley and Donnacha Dennehy.

Before listening, I already knew a little bit about Irish electronics. Roger Doyle's *Baby Grand* (1978) – piano riffs groove before reverb intervenes, polishing the rough edges, slowing time down – confirmed my hunch that Doyle is a worthy ideas-man; strong concepts powerfully executed. Ian Wilson's faux-Romanticism isn't for me; Buckley's *Error Messages* (2006), leisurely arpeggios meet shuddering static, is exquisite. But I didn't feel this compilation had quite given me the information, aural and written background, that I'd have liked.

Important figures are missing. No Jennifer Walshe? No Ed Bennett? And as Buckley's piece fades after 3'30" into Donnacha Dennehy's *Misterman*, another shortcoming is revealed – too many composers are represented with what amounts to taster samples. Breadth rather than depth. More is less.

One dispiriting trend, though, is how many of these composers use electronics within terms set by instrumental music. Listening to

Wilson's cello-soaring *Devotional 3* (2010), Pat Daly's post-Reich *Com-plex* (2000) and Vincent Doherty's harmonically obedient *Snow Din* (2009) you wouldn't think that, in more idealistic times, in the era of Varèse, Xenakis and Pierre Henry, electronics were supposed to return gesture to a white canvas. It's not all bad though. Far from it. Enda Bates's *Liminality* (2006) is especially good: folk guitar reels are pushed through themselves, clear-cut harmonies are smudged and perspectives blur.

Philip Clark

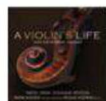
'A Violin's Life'

'Music for the Lipiński Strad'

Lipiński Caprice, Op 29 No 3 **Röntgen** Violin Sonata No 2, Op 20 **Schumann** Violin Sonata No 2, Op 121 **Tartini** Violin Sonata, 'Devil's Trill'

Frank Almond *vn* **William Wolfram** *pf*

Avie © AV2279 (68' • DDD)



Almond traces the provenance of his Lipiński Stradivarius

The idea of tracking the life of a violin, or making the character of a particular violin the unifying feature of a recital disc, isn't a new one, and the virtuosity of which a violin is capable is, of course, down to the player. The Stradivari is all about tone and so it is surprisingly unfortunate therefore that the technique-heavy Tartini *Devil's Trill* Sonata is an unassailable necessity on this disc (the Lipiński, for which this disc is a showcase, was originally owned by Tartini). There is none of the golden Stradivari thread pulling the sound together here: rather, it is oddly without centre and the tuning loses some of its reliability by the second movement. In fact, the more pressure there is on the bow, the more the sound seems to constrict. This is particularly noticeable in the Tartini; the Röntgen sonata is more lyrical and allows Almond more space to let the violin sing. It is when the bowing

broadens out that you can hear the tenacity in the sound and that is most evident in the Schumann sonata (woven into the life story by the tenuous thread that Schumann wrote it in Leipzig when Lipiński was working in Dresden, also in Germany).

This particularly fine example of Stradivari's work is given generous centre stage by Almond's longtime duo partner William Wolfram but it remains impossible to wonder whether choosing music to match the violin's sound – such as on James Ehnes's 'Homage' (Onyx, 3/09) – rather than to match where it was when, isn't perhaps a more sympathetic way to showcase a violin's most special qualities. **Caroline Gill**

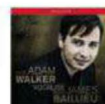
'Vocalise'

Barber Canzone, Op 38a **Bartók** Suite paysanne hongroise (arr Arma) **Messiaen** Leçons de solfège

Poulenc Flute Sonata. Vocalise **Schubert** Variations on 'Trockne Blumen', D802

Adam Walker *fl* **James Baillieu** *pf*

Opus Arte © OACD9012D (64' • DDD)



Song-inspired works for star flautist's debut solo recording

Adam Walker, principal flute of the LSO, tells us that the music he performs here 'has at its heart the human voice and its range of emotional expression'. He is a superb player, with a tone that is slightly cool, and there is much delicacy of nuance in his phrasing. This especially suits French music, and his partner James Baillieu provides accompaniments with just the right degree of often gentle support, balanced with the flute to perfection. So the listener can expect something distinctive here, and is not disappointed.

Moreover, the programme could not be more enticing. Poulenc's Flute Sonata has one of those exquisite, unforgettable cantilena slow movements, and it is played here quite magically. The work then ends with a delicious *Presto giocoso*, which brings stunning virtuosity from Adam Walker. I did not know Messiaen's *Leçons de solfège* but they include another seductive *Très lent* and an equally memorable *Modéré* finale, played by both artists quite hauntingly. Bartók's *Suite paysanne hongroise* was another surprise – 15 miniatures, including nine brief Hungarian peasant dances (to my ears not very Bartókian), all brimming over with charm. Barber's rather melancholy *Canzone* is touchingly vocal and has much in common with Poulenc's *Vocalise*. The concert ends, appropriately, with Schubert's only significant work for flute, a set of variations on the 18th song in *Die schöne Müllerin*, its variety of style providing flautist and pianist with a diverting partnership which they relish. They are beautifully recorded.

Ivan March

Instrumental



Caroline Gill reviews a British violinist's Telemann exploration:
'With Magub's endless inventiveness driving each tiny movement, the works shine here for what they really are' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 74**



Jed Distler on a long-awaited solo recital from Emanuel Ax:
'Ax scrubs Schumann's Symphonic Etudes clean of long-encrusted interpretative traditions' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 75**

JS Bach

Six Partitas, BWV825-30

David Korevaar *pf*

MSR Classics © ② MS1461 (154' • DDD)



Now the Bach Partitas from Colorado professor Korevaar

In the intelligent booklet-notes accompanying David Korevaar's recording of Bach's Partitas, the pianist discusses the music's dance origins in extensive, well-researched detail. But can one dance to Korevaar's actual performances? His mannered phrasings in No 1's Praeludium hint at the curvaceous Allemande that follows complete with overwrought embellishments on the repeat, a Corrente that sometimes rushes at the ends of bars and a lyrically drawn-out Sarabande that conveys little of Angela Hewitt's firm centre and inner rhythmic integrity. Korevaar enjoys manipulating linear strands: sometimes with marvellous wit and élan, as in No 2's Rondeaux, yet sometimes without a clear-cut foreground and background focus, as in No 4's Menuet. No 5 hits and misses, starting with a Praeambulum that is rudderless to the point of prissy and concluding with a Gigue where the agogic stresses do not get in the way of the music's joyous build.

A generally understated, direct account of the A minor Partita (No 3) reveals Korevaar at his best, as does No 6, where the pianist displays a higher degree of controlled freedom in the Toccata's easy ebb and flow. The Air is sedate yet gently lilting – yes, you can dance to this one! – and the Sarabande's ornaments and discreet pedal effects illuminate the music's harmonic tension. The carefully scaled dynamics and gradations of touch with which Korevaar shapes the Gigue's contrapuntal layers and embellishments rank high in recorded Bach pianism. I would have expected a more consistent set of Partitas from David Korevaar, whose earlier *Well-Tempered Clavier* and *Goldberg Variations* better exemplify his strongly individual and authoritative Bach pianism.

Jed Distler

Selected comparison:

Hewitt (6/97) (HYPE) CDA67191/2

JS Bach

'Transcribed for Piano'

Transcriptions and original compositions by **Alkan, Anonymous, Bantock, Bauer, Bax, Berners, M Blake, Bliss, Bridge, Busoni, Cohen, Finnissy, Goossens, Grainger, Gray, Ireland, Howells, G Jackson, Kempff, Lambert, Martucci, Mays, Millward, Reger, Saint-Saëns, Sarhan, Schröder, Schultz, Scott, Szántó, Tausig, Toovey, Vaughan Williams, Walton, Weir, Whittaker and Wild**

Antony Gray *pf*

ABC Classics © ③ ABC476 5171 (3h 27' • DDD)

'Bach Metamorphosis'

Transcriptions by **Braunfels, Briskier, Didenko, Goncharov, Iljin, C Lucas, Murdoch, Philipp, Prado, Tausig and Vaughan Williams**

Angelika Nebel *pf*

Hänssler Classic © CD98 004 (56' • DDD)



Australian and German pianists concoct Bach transcription discs

Antony Gray's three-disc collection of arrangements (62 different movements in all) is an imaginatively sourced compendium. It seems to have been a long time in the making, the earliest track (just one) dating from 1998, the majority from Australian sessions in 2003 and 2004 and a further nine from St Augustine, Kilburn, in 2012. From the vast array of Bach transcriptions for the piano, many of Gray's selection have either never been recorded before or are hard to track down.

He begins, though, with the 13 numbers from *A Bach Book for Harriet Cohen* and immediately faces stiff – and, in this case, winning – competition from Jonathan Plowright (Hyperion, A/10). It is not just the latter's mellow, fuller tone production but his more lucid voicing and musical imagination. The chorale tunes in, for instance, the Bach-Bantock *Wachet auf* and Bach-Berners *In dulci jubilo* sing forth while Gray gives a muddled equal emphasis to melody and decoration. Nor can Gray match Horowitz's miraculous part-playing in his 1934 Bach-Busoni *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein*. Very soon – and I never thought I'd say this about JSB – these

transcriptions all begin to sound the same. But if Gray is uneven in his response, he is clearly a well-equipped player and produces some lovely playing on these three discs where some attractive discoveries will undoubtedly appeal to repertoire junkies. Among them are Harold Bauer's arrangements of two movements from the Cello Suites Nos 1 and 6, and Martucci's of three movements from *Orchestral Suites*. Almost all the arrangements up till then are fairly faithful to Bach. Gray changes course for most of the third disc, which is devoted to contemporary reworkings of Bach. You may find these more substantial, rewarding and memorable than I did.

Gray can be pedestrian but he is a veritable Volodos compared with the enervating Angelika Nebel on her collection of 13 arrangements. The Vaughan Williams (ponderously slow) is the only duplication of repertoire between the four discs, besides the Siciliano from the Flute Sonata BWV1031 transcribed by Isidor Philipp (indistinguishable from many others; Gray chooses Alkan's version). Bathed throughout in a wash of pedal, Nebel's playing is unfailingly dull. For comparison, turn to Olga Samaroff (r1930) in the 'Little' Fugue in G minor and Wilhelm Backhaus in the 'Pastorale' from the *Christmas Oratorio* (r1934) to hear hyphenated Bach on a completely different level. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Chopin

Piano Sonatas - No 1, Op 4; No 2, Op 35; No 3, Op 58.
Four Ballades. Four Scherzos

Vassily Primakov *pf*

LP Classics © ② 1009 (155' • DDD)



Primakov launches his own label with Chopin

'A talented young pianist worth watching' was how I summed up my generally positive review of Vassily Primakov's 2004 all-Chopin debut release for the small American Tavros label. Primakov, of course, has since amassed a large discography for Bridge and now launches his own label with a full-course Chopin meal consisting of the three sonatas, the four Scherzos and a remake of the four Ballades included on the aforementioned debut. While

Primakov stands many of Chopin's dynamic markings and phrasings on their collective head, his sophisticated pedalling, pinpoint control of nuance and colour and strong polyphonic awareness consistently hold interest. Like the stricter Géza Anda and freer Shura Cherkassky, Primakov's Chopin is less concerned with projecting the big picture in cumulative arcs than in cobbling together large mosaics out of small details.

Cases in point include the heightened presence of the bass-lines in the Fourth Ballade's coda, along with the intriguing shifts in balance with which Primakov dispatches his rhapsodically paced Fourth Scherzo's soft rapid chords and quicksilver runs. Primakov's *rubatos* somewhat pacify the agitated qualities of the Second Ballade's A minor episodes, yet more harmonic felicities and melodic shaping emerge as a result. Some listeners, however, may find the rhythmic holdings back and speedings up in the first two Scherzos more eccentric than purposeful, not to mention the pianist's mannered tempo fluctuations in the G minor Ballade's coda and B minor Sonata's *Scherzo*.

However, Primakov's *affettuoso* style makes as compelling a case for the early, rarely performed First Sonata as Leif Ove Andsnes's far more direct interpretation (Virgin, 6/92). And when he chooses to play perfectly straight, as in the outer sections of the Second Sonata's *Scherzo* – listen to those surgically precise leaps in contrary motion! – Primakov's individuality still comes across. I only wish that he hadn't ended his suavely shaped unison finale with a long pause before the sudden final chord, robbing the effect of its shock value. The resonant sound approaches concert-hall realism. **Jed Distler**

Haydn

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 5'

Piano Sonatas – HobXVI/12; HobXVI/13; HobXVI/22; HobXVI/40; HobXVI/41; HobXVI/42

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet *pf*

Chandos © CHAN10763 (75' • DDD)



Disc 5 and one-third of the way into Bavouzet's Haydn journey

With the appearance of the fifth volume of his Haydn keyboard sonata survey, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet has now covered 22 sonatas (plus the F minor Variations), which by my reckoning means he's about a third of the way through the entire cycle. It's not unfair to say that when he completes it it's likely to be a modern benchmark in this music. He's already been hailed as a worthy successor to Alfred Brendel (Stephen Plaistow on Vol 3 – 12/11): high praise indeed, and well-earned as he journeys through these endlessly fascinating works. While perhaps often hidden from view to a greater extent than

Haydn's symphonies or quartets, they are nevertheless a never-quite-private diary of some of his most brilliant harmonic, rhythmic and metric *jeux d'esprit*.

Bavouzet continues to demonstrate his deep engagement with the sonatas through his ever-questing insistence on viewing the score merely as a working document, altering (as well as ornamenting) repeats, omitting codas and codettas on the first pass, and taking considered and personal decisions on tempo, dynamics, phrasing and so on. His thorough (and thoroughly absorbing) booklet-notes spell all this out and recount his first read-through of the Minuet of the A major Sonata, No 12. Mesmerised by the chromaticism of the Trio's minor-key passage, he played it over and over, ever more slowly, eventually arriving at a tempo unsustainable within the context of the movement. He includes that experiment as an envoi to the disc, bringing to mind a parallel, perhaps, with the *Nachtmusik* at the centre of Symphony No 4 but introducing a remarkable, almost impressionistic haze to its undulating dissonances and, in so doing, reminding us again how much more there is to this music than we hear in those straight-backed, schoolmarmish performances we so often suffer from other quarters. **David Threasher**

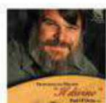
Milano

'Il Divino'

Fantasias, Ricercars and Intabulations

Paul O'Dette *lute*

Harmonia Mundi © HMU90 7557 (77' • DDD)



O'Dette plays lute music by the man they called 'The Divine'

What better vehicle for the artistry of one of today's most gifted lutenists could there be than the music of a 16th-century lutenist whose compositions and playing so ravished the senses of his contemporaries that they called him *Il Divino*? Francesco da Milano (1497–1543) was part of a musical family and a large part of his career was spent in the service of various popes as well as working for Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici. His 125-plus surviving compositions comprise fantasias or ricercars and intabulations of vocal music including motets, madrigals and chansons.

As O'Dette points out in his booklet-note, there is evidence that 16th-century lutenists organised their music into suites comprising a tightly structured contrapuntal fantasia and/or more improvisatory ricercar, an intabulation and a dance or group of dances. Since no dances survive by Francesco, O'Dette has organised works by the composer into suites which finish with intabulations of lively, dance-like French chansons such as Claudin de Sermisy's 'Vignon vignetta'. The result is a

truly ravishing programme in which Francesco's masterly control of drama through register, texture and ornament is fully brought out by O'Dette's highly expressive, *cantabile* and colouristic playing. These works are miniatures, yes; but even in such short works as Ricercar 4, which clocks in at just under a minute, the lyrical intensity is as profound as that in the longer Ricercar 51, one of the finest pieces selected for this recording by our own latter-day Orpheus. **William Yeoman**

Moeran

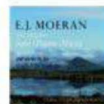
'The Complete Solo Piano Music and

Works by his English & Irish Contemporaries'

Moeran Stalham River. Theme and Variations. Two Folksong Arrangements. Two Legends. Three Piano Pieces. Three Fancies. Toccata. Summer Valley. Bank Holiday. Two Pieces **Baines** Seven Preludes **Fleischmann** Suite **Howells** Sonatina. The 'Chosen' Tune **Pitfield** Prelude. Minuet and Reel **Swaffield** Rapallo. Sailing Along. Intermezzo alla pastorale **Vaughan Williams** Hymn Tune Prelude on Song 13 (Gibbons). The Lake in the Mountains

Duncan Honeybourne *pf*

EM Records © ② EMRCD012/13 (155' • DDD)



Honeybourne at the piano with a generation of British works

One of the great discoveries of my youth was the Symphony in G minor of EJ Moeran. This almost went into eclipse in the following years. But now, like so much of the music of the 20th-century English (and Irish) renaissance, it is being rediscovered. So this collection of music by Moeran and his contemporaries, living on both sides of the Irish Sea, is immensely valuable.

Moeran was born in Middlesex of an Irish father but grew up in rural Norfolk, and both Norfolk and Ireland provided part of his musical heritage. He achieved fame with his orchestral music but his earlier piano works are also both individual and inspired. The Three Piano Pieces were the first to be published and the opening 'Lake Island' has a similar gentle evocativeness to the following 'Autumn Woods'. The boisterous, very Irish 'At Horse Fair' makes a lively contrast.

The Theme and Variations is seductively managed – sample the lovely Var 8. *Stalham River*, a miniature tone-poem, slightly Delian in character, is also poetically inspired. Of the two *Legends*, the piano-writing certainly suggests a narrative, while the *Three Fancies* make a perfectly poetic triptych, the 'Windmills' descriptive, the central 'Elegy' thoughtful and introspective, and the 'Burlesque' a captivating Irish dance. Moeran's folksong arrangements too are memorable, notably the gentle 'Irish Love Song', while 'The White Mountain' draws simply on the famous 'Star of the County Down'. Among the



Gut and steel: Maya Magub records Telemann's Fantasias at Pianella Studios, Malibu, California

works by his contemporaries, the programme includes a late work by Herbert Howells, a Sonatina that is in every way distinctive, with vivacious outer movements and a haunting *Adagio* marked *serioso*. Moeran's own highly individual pastoralism contrasts not only with the music of Howells but also with his own effervescent Toccata. *Summer Valley* again quotes beguilingly from 'Star of the County Down' and *Bank Holiday* is infectious and bustling.

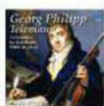
The three works of Ronald Swaffield are all enticing miniatures and the Seven Preludes of the Yorkshire composer William Baines are equally diverse and ear-catching. Vaughan Williams isn't forgotten here either: the Hymn Tune Prelude and *The Lake in the Mountains* show him at his most evocative. Thomas Pitfield takes us to Lancashire with his winningly inventive *Prelude, Minuet and Reel*. The collection ends with Moeran's tranquil, Delian 'Prelude' and 'Berceuse', the last two pieces he wrote for solo piano. Duncan Honeybourne identifies completely with all this music and plays it with much feeling. He is well recorded and provides highly illuminating and extensive notes. A set not to be missed by all lovers of English music. **Ivan March**

Telemann

12 Fantasias for Violin without Continuo,
TWV40/14-25

Maya Magub *vn*

CRD (M) CRD3530 (70' • DDD)



British violinist Magub tackles the Telemann Fantasias

This is the second release in as many years of Telemann's vignettes that resolutely succeeds in keeping your attention from beginning to end. The first was their transcription for viola by Ori Kam (Berlin Classics, 8/12), where their main attraction was the warmth brought by bringing their pitch down to something more closely resembling the human voice. That added comfort in the sound made it possible – desirable – to sit and listen to the nearly 50 separate movements that constitute the complete set without a break, but Maya Magub does not have that luxury of a mellifluous viola tone to help her. She nevertheless succeeds, though, in leading the listener through Telemann's maze of musical mini-experiments with so much engagement that it is impossible to turn them off until they're finished.

She uses both gut and steel strings in this recording, which – combined with a bow that, although not Baroque, is very light – brings a playfulness to the dance-like passages in particular that is underpinned by a solidity of tone, pitch and consistency that give her freedom to work with the music itself, rather than simply to navigate the inherent difficulties

in an authentic performance of music this exposed. It means she is able to – and does – bring out all its contrasting influences; and hearing folk music and polyphony coexisting as they do in the first movement of the A major Fantasia, for instance, is so unexpected that it makes listening to this performance a really joyous experience. These pieces were dismissed as student exercises for generations (perhaps in an effort to create a distinction between them and the superior Sonatas and Partitas of Bach), but with Magub's endless inventiveness driving each tiny movement, they shine here for what they really are: free-standing, varied concentrations of beautiful melody and sonority. **Caroline Gill**

Wagner

'The Ring Planos Project, Vol 1'

Das Rheingold and Die Walküre – excs
(transc Hermann Behn, 1914)

Cord Garben, Thomas Hoppe *pfs*

Dynaudio (E) 4260187 720870 (69' • DDD)

Wagner

'Götterdämmerung'

Der fliegende Holländer – Overture (transc Debussy). Götterdämmerung – Siegfried's Death; Closing Scene (both transc Pringsheim). Tannhäuser – Bacchanal; Venusberg Music (both transc Dukas). Tristan und Isolde – Prelude; Liebestod (both transc Reger)

Yaara Tal, Andreas Groethuysen *pfs*
 Sony Classical © 88765 44159-2 (65' • DDD)



Wagner, from four pianists at four pianos on two discs

The heyday of piano ensemble transcriptions from orchestral and operatic scores more or less coincided with the height of Richard Wagner's popularity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a result, numerous arrangers recast Wagner opera scenes and overtures for two pianos, none more ambitiously than Hermann Behn (1859-1927), a Hamburg-based, Bruckner-trained composer responsible for a once-popular collection called *50 Symphonic Movements from Richard Wagner's Musical Dramas*.

The first instalment of Cord Garben and Thomas Hoppe's 'The Ring Pianos Project' offers the premiere recordings of 'bleeding chunks' from *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. Although the uniformity of the pianos' sonorities sometimes obscures the relationships between vocal lines and orchestral accompaniment (the Giants' first appearance in *Das Rheingold*, Brünnhilde's high C swoops at the outset of Act 2 of *Die Walküre*), Behn truly shines when orchestral textures are massive and thick (*Das Rheingold*'s final pages) or mostly decorative (the Ride of the Valkyries' swirling scales, the Magic Fire Music's cascading effects). At the same time, the simpler, more transparent keyboard-writing characterising the confrontation between Brünnhilde and Siegmund in Act 2 of *Die Walküre* finds the Garben/Hoppe duo at their most sensitive and refined from the standpoint of tone colour and ensemble exactitude. Just be aware of the high-handed, self-serving and pretentious booklet-notes.

By contrast, Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen offer a wide variety of arrangers and altogether suppler, more finely calibrated duo pianism. The *Flying Dutchman* Overture in Debussy's arrangement and Reger's slightly upholstered Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* have never sounded so assured, lithe and well balanced on disc. Similarly, Dukas's treatment of the *Tannhäuser* Bacchanal stands out for the duo's suave rapid passagework and eloquent long lines. From *Götterdämmerung* we hear Siegfried's Death and Funeral March and the Immolation Scene in two skilfully wrought, previously unrecorded arrangements by the noted mathematician Alfred Pringsheim, who was Thomas Mann's father-in-law. Tal and Groethuysen achieve remarkable synchronicity in the way they interweave the vocal lines and elaborate multi-motif orchestral frameworks in perfect perspective, while shaping the inevitable

tremolos with appreciable textural and dynamic variety. Moreover, Egon Voss's annotations couldn't be more informative, clear and concise. **Jed Distler**

'L'enfance'

Bizet *Jeux d'enfants*, Op 22 **Debussy** *Petite suite*

Fauré *Dolly*, Op 56 **Ravel** *Ma Mère l'Oye*

Claire Désert, Emmanuel Strosser *pf*

Mirare © MIR190 (66' • DDD)



Désert and Strosser at one piano for French classics

All too often we regard piano duets as somewhat childish pleasures but there's nothing emotionally juvenile about any of the music on offer here. The two pianists sharing a piano stool embody the best of the French tradition – crystalline tone, pristine fingerwork and clarity of thought – and they make a compelling partnership. Their reading of Fauré's famous *Dolly* suite is utterly unsentimental and all the better for it, be it in the warmly confiding 'Le jardin de Dolly' or the ebullient Spanishries of the final number, in which they make light work of the tricky co-ordination between four hands.

Similarly, there's strong characterisation in each of the 12 miniatures that make up Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants*, be it the proudly galumphing hobby-horses ('Les chevaux de bois'), the earnestly marching 'Trompette et tambour', what is patently a very boisterous game of leapfrog ('Saute-mouton') or the uproarious final 'Le bal' ('The Ball'), the party sounding as if it has got rather out of hand. But equally fine are the more introverted moments, not least the loving duet between husband and wife ('Petit mari, petite femme'), while 'Les bulles de savon' ('Soap bubbles') seems almost a forerunner of Prokofiev's *Visions fugitives* in its gawky melodic contours and obsessive rhythms. Again, in Debussy's youthful *Petite suite*, Désert and Strosser veer well away from undue sugariness, their 'En bateau' more poised than that of Pascal and Ami Rogé, who sound a little more arch in 'Cortège'. The 'Menuet' on the new disc is particularly alluring.

If there are any reservations, then they involve the Ravel, which some might find a degree too cool, particularly the opening 'Pavane'. In 'Petit Poucet' ('Tom Thumb') the tinkling interjections at the top of the keyboard around two-thirds of the way in are so subtle as to be almost inaudible, and the haughty Empress Laideronnette could perhaps let her hair down a little more, as the writing itself seems to suggest. But the remaining two pieces work well, 'Le jardin féérique' providing a suitably magical envoi to a scintillating disc.

Harriet Smith

Debussy – selected comparison:

P & A Rogé (12/11) (ONYX) ONYX4059

'Variations'

Beethoven *Variations and Fugue, 'Eroica'*, Op 35

Haydn *Sonata (un piccolo divertimento: Variations)*, HobXVII/6 **Schumann** *Etudes symphoniques*, Op 13

Emanuel Ax *pf*

Sony Classical © 88765 42086-2 (74' • DDD)



Ax's view of variation form with a few extras thrown in

Emanuel Ax is on top form for his first solo CD in many years. In contrast to the genial, well-played and slightly cautious *Eroica* Variations he recorded for RCA in the 1970s he now presents a tougher-skinned, more dynamically varied and assiduously unified view of this wonderful score. The devil is in the detail: notice, for example, how nimbly he differentiates Var 2's *legato* and detached phrasings, or his pinpoint control of Var 4's momentary *crescendos* and the effortless left-hand broken octaves in Var 6. His flexible, long-lined parsing of Var 5 and rock-steady, sharply accented way with the canonic Var 6 underline the music's foreshadowing of Brahms's beloved cross-rhythmic phrases. The final *Largo* variation adds up to a masterclass in how to give the utmost variety and refinement to the decorative right-hand writing within as steady a basic pulse as possible. Ax's measured pace for the concluding fugue allows him to scale the dynamics, gauge the climaxes and articulate the double notes for maximum impact and textural variety, rather than fall prey to the inevitable blurring that occurs when one reads Beethoven's *allegro con brio* directive as 'damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead'.

Similar observations apply to Ax's Haydn F minor Variations, where the exquisitely shaded chains of trills, subtle colour-changes and chamber-like repartee between both hands is further enhanced by one of the best-regulated and engineered Yamaha CFX concert grands it has been my pleasure to experience.

Ax scrubs Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes* clean of certain long-encrusted interpretative 'traditions'. While many pianists turn the opening theme into a heavy dirge, Ax's lighter, faster, more direct approach is a breath of fresh air. He lets Etude 2's melody and bass-line take wing by not emoting over the repeated triplet chords, and aligns Etude 4's chordal canonic writing to perfection. Although Etude 9's quiet rapid chords and upward chromatic patterns are polished and voiced to a proverbial T, I wouldn't have minded more audacity and panache à la Thibaudet, Richter and Anda, not to mention Samson François. But Ax makes this music sound less square-toed and repetitive than it often seems. He places three of the five posthumously published études (Nos 4, 5 and 2) within the context of the standard text. A most welcome release.

Jed Distler



David Thresher listens to Mozart Requiem 'completions' from King's: *'The "Lacrimosa" from Michael Finnissy's realisation truly whets the appetite for a complete recording'* ► REVIEW ON PAGE 81



Richard Fairman reviews Italian song from soprano Anna Leese: *'The voice has a lot of overtones – everything here is luminescent, like the sun at its radiant midday height'* ► REVIEW ON PAGE 84

JS Bach

'Cantatas, Vol 28: City of London'

Cantatas – No 11, Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen, 'Ascension Oratorio'; No 37, Wer da gläubet und getauft wird; No 43, Gott fährt auf mit Jauchzen; No 128, Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein

Lenneke Ruiten *sop* **Meg Bragle** *contr* **Andrew Tortise** *ten* **Dietrich Henschel** *bass* **Monteverdi Choir**;

English Baroque Soloists / John Eliot Gardiner

Soli Deo Gloria © SDG185 (77' • DDD • T/D)

Recorded live at St Giles' Cripplegate, May 10, 2012



End of an epic: final Bach cantatas from Gardiner

The final disc in Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Bach cantata cycle offers the four works for Ascension Day – cantatas from the years 1724–26, plus the more familiar *Ascension Oratorio* of 1735 – that could not be recorded on the original Bach Pilgrimage in 2000 because of a noisy venue. These performances come from a specially mounted concert in St Giles' Cripplegate, London, in May 2012.

BWV37 is the earliest of the cantatas and opens with a chorus so lilyingly delightful that one imagines the only reason it is not the first item on the disc is its rather tired-sounding choral entries. BWV128, the next, features festive horns, a burst of free-spirited arioso midway through and an alto-tenor duet cut from the same humble cloth as the 'Et misericordia' of the *Magnificat*. BWV43, the last, is the piece that actually opens the disc, and proves worthy with a surprise opening of gently overlapping string lines quickly dissolving into a trumpet call that turns into the start of a choral fugue – an imaginative and exuberant representation of the Ascension. Drama was clearly on Bach's mind in this cantata, for its second part opens with a blustering bass recitative – imagine that bursting in on the end of the sermon!

Gardiner's performances show the ready familiarity with the music you would expect. His thoughtful approach to detail really shows itself in the choruses, perhaps above all in the chorales, each of which finds its own expressive solutions. Among the soloists, Dietrich Henschel sings with great authority, while the other, younger voices are slightly less sure-

footed technically, though the distinctive vocal quality and penetrating emotion of Meg Bragle's 'Ach, bleib doch' in the *Ascension Oratorio* suggests that she could become a sought-after artist. The recording quality is variable – some choruses sound surprisingly dull, some solos rather close – but no one completing their cantata cycle with this single disc need feel short-changed.

Lindsay Kemp

JS Bach

St Matthew Passion, BWV244

Mark Padmore *ten* Evangelist **Peter Harvey** *bass*

Christus **Maria Espada**, **Renate Arends** *sops* **Ingeborg**

Danz, **Barbara Kozelj** *mezs* **Peter Gijsbertsen** *ten*

Henk Neven *bass* **Netherlands Radio Choir**; **National**

Children's Choir; **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra / Iván Fischer**

Video director **Dick Kuijs**

ArtHaus Musik © 2 DVD 101 676; © 108 075

(174' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS-HD MA, DD5.0 & PCM stereo • O • s). Recorded live 2012

JS Bach

St Matthew Passion, BWV244

Werner Güra *ten* Evangelist **Stephen Morscheck**

bass-bar Christus **Lucy Crowe** *sop* **Christine Rice** *mez*

Nicholas Phan *ten* **Matthew Brook** *bass-bar* **Bertrand**

Grunenwald *bass* **Maitrise de Paris**; **Schola Cantorum**

of Oxford; **Paris Chamber Orchestra / John Nelson**

Video director **Louise Narboni**

Ideale Audience International © 2 DVD 307 9658

(177' + 52' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS5.0, DD5.0 & PCM stereo • O • s). Recorded live at the Basilica of Saint-Denis, 2011

Includes documentary, 'John Nelson's St Matthew

Passion – The Journey'



Live Matthew Passions on DVD from Amsterdam and the Saint-Denis Festival John Nelson describes the *St Matthew Passion* as 'the pinnacle of musical civilisation' in a persuasive documentary which accompanies his recorded performance from the Saint-Denis Festival in France in 2011. Doubtless Iván Fischer would offer the same epithet but that is about as much as these two new thoughtful and distinctive readings have in common. Iván

Fischer is not associated much with Bach but if the sign of our times is that more conductors are following the Chailly model and claiming him back for the mainstream, then that's all to the good. Like Chailly (who in the DVD stills look uncannily like Nelson – or rather the other way round), Fischer has a somewhat oblique relationship to 'period' style; and rather like the Gewandhaus, the Concertgebouw players sit comfortably as reconstructed 'al dente' modern instrumentalists, purring away as ever but with an ear for Baroque luminosity, elegant nuancing and the like. It's a supreme postmodern compromise.

They are, arguably, the most consistently compelling contributors to this performance (such as in 'Ich will bei meinem', launched by the oboe with wonderfully clarion-like qualities), the strings alluringly conversant and the chamber dialogues with the soloists always ringing with interest and vitality. Mark Padmore gives us another profoundly inhabited Evangelist, with not a moment wasted; it's a suitably austere reading at times, with clarity of annunciation given priority over extended tonal coloration. Ingeborg Danz is less convincing, overall, than one might have hoped but never less than authoritative. Peter Harvey's seasoned Christus provides an uncomplicated and devotional anchor to Fischer's otherwise objectivised reading.

Indeed, Fischer almost eschews a personal vision: he uses the spatial aspect, almost exaggerating the double-choir and orchestra scoring within the luxuriance of the Concertgebouw, choosing a deliberately restrained and undemonstrative manner. The benefits are heard in his acute ear for a pure, abstract line ignited in a clean, rhetorical glow. Speeds are fastidiously chosen but not for the sake of expressive immediacy or dramatic moment: the choir is fully stocked but where are the baying *turba*, the questing disciples, and where, in that movement of peerless mystery 'So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen', is the personal anguish?

Some may feel that the 'Great Passion' is best served without excess obtrusiveness into a Bach text already rich beyond compare. John Nelson's temperament and heart, however, return to some identifiable signposts



Standing up for Charpentier: Olivier Schneebeli and his forces recording at the chapel of the Palace of Versailles

for those who are drawn to the inner wonders of this visceral and shimmering journey. There may be less rarefied sophistication than with Fischer – and the Parisian instrumentalists are not always super-polished – but the corporate momentum in this reading is quite compelling.

Nelson gets to the core of the work with his avuncular didacticism and genial control; and what characterful singing emerges from the evergreen Lucy Crowe (one of the most beautiful 'Aus Liebes' you'll ever hear), the natural and increasingly high-octane Evangelist of Werner Güra and Stephen Morscheck's intense and patriarchal Christus, with Matthew Brook bringing his usual penetrative interpretation to proceedings. The last word goes to the fine Schola Cantorum of Oxford (mainly undergraduates not studying music), who deliver exactly what one misses in Fischer: true characterisation, tenderness, ardour and an attentiveness to detail which fuels Nelson's rounded and mature vision of the *St Matthew*.
Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Charpentier

Judith sive Bethulia liberata, H391.

Caedes sanctorum innocentium, H411

Dagmar Sasková *sop* **Erwin Aros** *countertenor*

Jean-François Novelli *ten* **Arnaud Richard** *bass*

Les Pages, Chanteurs et Symphonistes du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles / Olivier Schneebeli

K617 © K617 242 (59' • DDD • T)

Recorded live at the Chapelle Royal, Château de Versailles, October 5 & 6, 2012



Narrative Charpentier and his first sacred history, Judith

Charpentier's *histoires sacrées* show the strong influence of his probable teacher Carissimi. His first sacred history, *Judith*, was composed in the mid-1670s, shortly after returning from Rome: the alluring widow Judith dominates with her succession of solos (aptly characterised by Dagmar Sasková), as she seduces and then brutally beheads the sleeping Assyrian warrior Holofernes. The shorter and more engaging *Caedes sanctorum innocentium* (probably 1683–85) recounts Herod's massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem: a lovely pastoral sinfonia introduces the Angel warning Joseph to flee to Egypt, but the action moves rapidly to a double chorus that puts Herod's soldiers and the defiant mothers of Bethlehem in dramatic opposition and is then interjected by the mothers' plaintive lamentations.

Olivier Schneebeli directs full-blooded interpretations. The imbalance of sonorities

between a small band and a large choir (occasionally including children) seems skew-whiff – Charpentier's distinction between passages for 'petit choeur' and 'grand choeur' might not contradict the viability of a smaller vocal group. Singers over-egg their slurred appoggiaturas at cadences and a chorus for the Assyrians is exaggerated as a pantomime caricature of villainy, but this live recording offers a useful insight into some little-known Charpentier. Considering the scholarly activity by the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, the documentation simply isn't up to scratch: the booklet has 20 pages devoted to the artists and institutions involved in the project but allows only two columns for scholar Catherine Cessac to discuss the music, and there is only a French translation of the Latin librettos. **David Vickers**

Gribbin

Marrow Sang. Island People^a. Crossing the Sea^b. Anahorish^c. What the Whaleship Saw

^a**Patricia Rozario** *sop* ^b**Loré Lixenberg** *mez* ^c**Mark O'Keeffe** *tp* **Cliona Doris** *hp* **RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet**
NMC © NMCD185 (65' • DDD)



Chamber works and song from the Belfast-born composer

A notable presence on the UK contemporary music scene for well over a decade, Deirdre Gribbin (Belfast-born and now London-based) has written across a range of genres (not least opera – *Hey Persephone* being a high point of music theatre at the end of the last century), but the chamber domain seems ideally suited to her often inward and intimate manner of expression, and the present disc features five pieces from the past decade. Three of them feature the voice and two draw on poems by Seamus Heaney, whose tangible evoking of place is conveyed in the atmospheric settings of *Island People* and the wistful reminiscence of *Anabhorish*, whereas *Crossing the Sea* has recourse to Chinese poetry of the Tang era as it traverses a wider emotional range from visceral physicality to limpid stasis. The vocal writing is laudably expressive, yet those passages where the string quartet comes into its own bring a palpable and moving sense of going ‘beyond words’.

These works are themselves framed by two for the quartet alone, both of them focusing on the sea as well as outlining a progression from volatility to tranquillity – of which *Marrow Sam* charts the transformational imagery of the mermaid, whereas *What the Whaleship Saw* draws upon shipwreck and the grisly struggle for survival during its eventful course. Impressive playing, passionate and sensitive by turns, from the RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet and informative notes from the composer enhance the attractions of a release that is cordially recommended to Gribbin admirers and newcomers alike.

Richard Whitehouse

Handel

Chandos Anthems – No 5a, I will magnify Thee, O God, HWV250a; No 6a, As pants the hart, HWV251b; No 8, O come, let us sing unto the Lord, HWV253

Susan Gritton *sop* **Iestyn Davies** *countertenor*

Thomas Hobbs *ten* **Choir of Trinity College,**

Cambridge, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment / Stephen Layton

Hyperion © CDA67926 (75' • DDD • T)



Second set of Chandos Anthems from Trinity

Three cheers for three more anthems for the Duke of Chandos to complement the three already available from the same conductor and choir (Hyperion, 7/09). His Grace's musical establishment was much smaller than the sizeable forces employed here but many listeners will enjoy hearing Handel performed on a relatively grand scale.

As the composer recycled some of the numbers in his oratorios, choral performances are quite appropriate. And Stephen Layton directs his young singers with such a perfect control of texture and

rhythm that there's no hint of stodginess. Just listen to the way ‘Tell it out among the heathen’ in *O come, let us sing unto the Lord* swings along in its triple-time confidence.

At 30 minutes, *O come, let us sing* is the longest of the three. The final chorus includes semiquaver runs, which the tenors execute with impressive precision (as they do in the opening chorus of *I will magnify thee*). Susan Gritton charms with the dotted rhythm of ‘O magnify the Lord’ and Thomas Hobbs – assisted by violins and recorders – delicately evokes a pastoral scene in his first air. Another tenor air is assigned to the countertenor Iestyn Davies who, not surprisingly, sounds a little uncomfortable with the low notes.

The plum in *As pants the hart* is the soprano's ‘Tears are my daily food’. Like Lynne Dawson for Harry Christophers, Gritton gets louder on the long first note; but you have to go back to April Cantelo for David Willcocks (Argo, 7/68, 8/93, 7/00 – nla) to be mesmerised by what is more an intensification than a plain *crescendo*.

In fact this version, fine as it is, doesn't outclass the earlier recordings which, made 20 years apart, feature the seemingly ageless tenor of Ian Partridge.

Richard Lawrence

As pants the hart – selected comparison:

Sixteen, Christophers (8/89) (CHAN) CHAN0504

Hindemith

Apparebit repentina dies. Six Chansons.

Lieder nach alten Texten, Op 33. Mass

SWR Vocal Ensemble, Stuttgart; members of the SWR Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart / Marcus Creed
Hänssler Classic © CD93 295 (68' • DDD • T/t)



Choral works spanning the composer's creative life

This is a strangely unbalanced CD, opening with great vitality with the vivid brass of the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra heralding Hindemith's colourful setting of medieval Latin poems, *Apparebit repentina dies*, and closing with an almost deathly pallor in the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass. It also traverses a wide stylistic and chronological chasm, from the light, almost folksy settings of Hindemith's first music for unaccompanied chorus – the *Songs on Old Texts* of 1923 – to the austere anguish of the Mass, his last musical utterance, composed just weeks before his death in 1963.

What draws these disparate strands so effectively together is the excellent singing of the SWR Vocal Ensemble under Marcus Creed. The crisp textures of the *Songs on Old Texts* have a delightful buoyancy, while the ebullient but fiendishly difficult ‘Landsknechtstrinklied’ is delivered with unerring clarity and precision. Against this, the richly harmonised settings of Rainer Maria

Rilke in the *Six Chansons* have much warmth and expressiveness.

The Mass is something of an exception in Hindemith's output, being his only venture into the realms of the church's liturgy. This might suggest a late-life conversion to the Catholic faith – an idea effectively pooh-poohed by Heinz-Jürgen Winkler's booklet-notes – and its austere character probably accounts for its rare outings on CD (the only other version I have ever encountered is a long-since deleted disc on Globe from the Netherlands Chamber Choir – 5/96). Generally, Hindemith's choral music has been given scant coverage on disc, so this release, performed with real polish and recorded in a suitably generous acoustic by Hänssler Classic, is a valuable addition to the catalogue.

Marc Rochester

Janáček

Glagolitic Mass (original version, 1926-27)*.

Taras Bulba

***Aga Mikolaj** *sop* ***Iris Vermillion** *contr* ***Stuart Neill** *ten*

***Arutjun Kotchinian** *bass* ***Iveta Apkalna** *org*

Berlin Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra /

Marek Janowski

Pentatone © PTC5186 388 (65' • DDD/DSD)



Janowski and his orchestra on a break from Wagner operas

Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* has had a number of successful recordings, most notably by Rafael Kubelík and Karel Ančerl, both Czechs, and by Charles Mackerras, who made himself into something of an honorary Czech. Marek Janowski's approach differs from these, not necessarily for the worse, as the work can by now be regarded as a masterpiece of universal validity, whatever its origin. He uses, incidentally, the edition by Paul Wingfield, as Mackerras has done, which gives us the Intrada twice, at the beginning as well as the end.

However, Janowski takes an altogether gentler view of the work compared to the ebullient energy of Kubelík and in particular Mackerras, and this seems too often out of place. In the ‘Slava’ (*Gloria*), for instance, though the excellent chorus sing well, as does the soprano soloist, Aga Mikolaj, the music demands greater punch and precision. Janowski seems intent on suggesting a more lyrical approach, latent in Mackerras's splendid reading but contained within a toughness and forcefulness that are really closer to Janáček's manner. In his version, the brass blaze and the timpani throb where Janowski keeps them restrained.

Not surprisingly, Janowski is at his most effective in the ‘Agneče Božji’ (*Agnus Dei*); this is gracefully done. The extraordinary organ solo is well played, though it is necessarily imported from another Berlin recording site,



Leonardo García Alarcón, the Namur Chamber Choir and New Century Baroque record Mozart's Requiem at Bourg-en-Bresse, France (see following page)

the Philharmonie. In *Taras Bulba*, again, Janowski seems to prefer softer outlines and gentler textures than are really demanded by music that is capable of considerable ferocity, and gets it from Mackerras. **John Warrack**

Glagolitic Mass – selected comparisons:

Czech PO, Ančerl (11/64th, 12/94th) (SUPR) SU3667-2

Bavarian Rad SO, Kubelík (7/65th) (DG) 463 672-2G0R

Czech PO, Mackerras (10/86th) (SUPR) SU3045-2

Taras Bulba – selected comparison:

Czech PO, Mackerras (5/04) (SUPR) SU3739-2

MacMillan

O^o. Tryst. Magnificat^o. Nunc dimittis^o

Netherlands Radio^o Choir and Chamber

Philharmonic Orchestra / James MacMillan

Challenge Classics © CC72554 (56' • DDD)



MacMillan conducts his own music in Amsterdam

The disc opens with a morose Advent antiphon simply titled *O* which, we are told, is derived from the sound 'O' which is to be found in many liturgical texts, and especially in the Latin antiphons which frame the Magnificat at the office of Vespers during the last week of Advent. This particular antiphon is the one set to be sung on the fourth day before Christmas. Originally one of the Strathclyde Motets of

2007, MacMillan arranged it the following year for three treble voices, trumpet and strings. I imagine it works very well in that setting. Unfortunately here the voices are distinctly female and soprano, and the lack of purity as well as the rather heavily nuanced diction (notably giving a certain thickness to the vowel 'O') lend the piece an unwholesome solidity.

The absence of texts or translations is a disappointment, but since the other choral works on the disc are the two evening canticles – the Magnificat and the Nunc dimittis – the texts of which are pretty well universally known, it is not too serious an omission. In any case, the largest single item here is the powerful orchestral piece *Tryst*, composed in 1989. MacMillan here drives the Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic with great verve, producing a performance which is as exciting as it is absorbing. Compared with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Jerzy Maksymiuk (Koch-Schwann, 10/92), this is altogether tauter and dramatically more vivid. Both the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc dimittis* were composed for British cathedral choirs (Wells and Winchester respectively – although the booklet-notes erroneously suggest the *Nunc dimittis* was commissioned by Westminster Cathedral) and have been recorded in a cathedral setting (by the Wells choir –

Hyperion, 9/11). The added colour of the orchestral accompaniment on this Challenge Classics disc is a big plus; the rather stodgy singing of the Netherlands Radio Choir is not. This is clearly a very fine choir but somehow it seems awkward and clumsy in this repertoire, making too much of a meal of the dynamics and phrasing, and in the process obscuring the inherent beauty of Macmillan's inspired writing. **Marc Rochester**

Monteverdi

'Selva morale e spirituale, Vol 3'

Selva morale e spirituale - Laudate Dominum

(secondo); Iste Confessor (secondo); Magnificat

(secondo); Credidi propter quod locutus sum;

Pianto della Madonna; Beatus vir (secondo);

È questa vita un lampo; Confitebor tibi Domine

(secondo); Memento, Domine, David; Laudate pueri

(secondo); Salve regina (terzo); Magnificat (primo)

The Sixteen / Harry Christophers

Coro © COR16109 (76' • DDD • T/t)



The Sixteen's Selva morale survey arrives at its end

This is the final volume in The Sixteen's survey of Monteverdi's *Selva morale e spirituale* (published Venice, 1641). The series omits four short pieces, not counting those hymns for

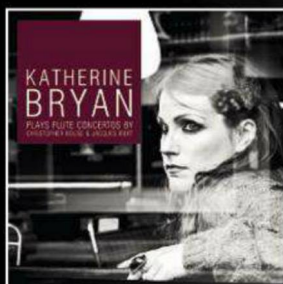
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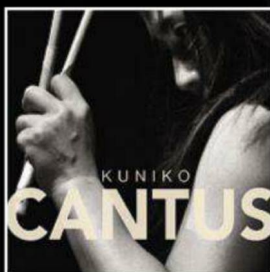
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which Monteverdi used identical music for different texts. However, few 'complete' sets of *Selva morale* contain 100 per cent of the pieces, and The Sixteen actually include most of the non-liturgical madrigals and canzonettas excluded by La Venexiana (Glossa) and Akadêmia (Zig-Zag): this instalment has a characterful interpretation of the madrigal 'È questa vita un lampo', performed spiritedly by five voices, and Grace Davidson's chaste singing of the 'Pianto della Madonna', a sacred Latin contrafactum of the lament from the otherwise lost opera *Arianna*.

The double-choir motets 'Memento, Domine, David' and 'Credidi propter quod locutus sum' both suit The Sixteen's *a cappella* expertise perfectly. Two contrasting *Magnificat* settings aptly illustrate that Monteverdi's career straddled the 16th-century Renaissance and the modern Baroque style of the early 17th century; in the enthralling eight-voice *Magnificat* (primo), Christophers opts to adhere respectfully to Monteverdi's string scoring rather than adopt the composer's own optional alternative suggestion of trombones for the lower parts – a consistent policy in this series. The choral, small ensemble and solo singing is always as accomplished as one expects from The Sixteen but singers benefit immeasurably from the subtly supportive continuo playing of David Miller (theorbo), Frances Kelly (harp) and Alastair Ross (keyboards). There are also gently eloquent contributions from violinists Walter Reiter and Simon Jones; their tender ritornellos during 'Iste Confessor' (secondo) are the perfect foil for the radiant soprano dialogue between Davidson and Elin Manahan Thomas. Harry Christophers enthuses that this project 'proved to be some of the most enjoyable and evocative music-making in which we have ever participated'; such communal affection shows in their intelligently programmed pathway through Monteverdi's 'moral and spiritual forest'. **David Vickers**

Selected comparisons:

Venexiana, Carvina (5/09) (GLOS) GCD920914

Akadêmia, Lasserre (ZZT) ZZT031101

Mozart

Requiem, K626 (compl Süßmayr), plus movements from completions by Maunder, Levin, Beyer, Druce and Finnissy
Elin Manahan Thomas *sop* **Christine Rice** *mez*
James Gilchrist *ten* **Christopher Purves** *bass-bar*
Choir of King's College, Cambridge;
Academy of Ancient Music / Stephen Cleobury
 King's College © KGS0002
 (62' + 67' • DDD/DSD • T/I)

Bonus disc includes 'Mozart's Requiem:

An Audio Documentary' written by Cliff Eisen

Mozart

Requiem, K626 (ed Beyer/Maunder/Alarcón)^a.
 Clarinet Concerto, K622^b

^a**Lucy Hall** *sop* ^a**Angélique Noldus** *mez* ^a**Hui Jin** *ten*

^a**Josef Wagner** *bass-bar* ^b**Benjamin Dijkstra** *basset cl*

Namur Chamber Choir; New Century Baroque /
Leonardo García Alarcón

Ambronay © AMY038 (66 • DDD • T/I)



The 'Beyer' Requiem from Alarcón's ensembles and 'completions' from King's College Choir continue releases on their own label with a performance of the 'traditional' version of Mozart's Requiem, as completed after his death by Franz Xaver Süßmayr. This is once again enjoying a greater vogue than in recent years, which have seen completions by a number of composers and musicologists, notable among them Duncan Druce of this parish. A major point of interest in King's College's project is the inclusion of whole movements from some of these more recent attempts to realise Mozart's supposed intentions: thus we hear the 'Amen' fugue developed by Richard Maunder from a 16-bar sketch discovered in the 1960s, a 'Sanctus' as envisioned by Robert Levin, Druce's extended 'Benedictus' and Levin's closing fugue (although Maunder's more interventionist revision, re-laying the text of the countersubject, might have been more noticeably different than Levin's 'lightly revised' offering). Most fascinatingly, however, we hear the 'Lacrimosa' from Michael Finnissy's recent realisation, which truly whets the appetite for a complete recording.

The performance of the Requiem itself is a straight-down-the-middle oratorio-style affair such as is heard from many a choir or choral society. The Academy of Ancient Music provide solid support and choral scholars sing lustily. The boys, however, have a tendency towards sharpness: beam up in the 'Dies irae' at about 0'36', where the trebles enter (bar 22) on E at the top of the stave, followed in the next bar by the same (sounding) E in the trumpet, and you'll hear two noticeably different views on the same note; the boys might also have benefited from another run at 'ne absorbeat' in the Offertory – and it's the same story largely throughout. A bonus disc with a generous audio documentary by a leading Mozart scholar is provided but by that point I'd resorted to the earplugs.

No such tuning issues in Leonardo García Alarcón's recording, and a performance that emphasises the work's drama in a manner that puts one in mind of Teodor Currentzis's offering from Novosibirsk. Nothing so straightforward as the Süßmayr version, either: Alarcón opts to base his performance on Franz Beyer's 1971 edition but with many of his own amendments, most audibly in the

brass parts. Not only that but he interpolates Maunder's 'Amen' after Süßmayr's plagal close to the 'Lacrimosa' and – again following Maunder's thinking – omits entirely the 'Sanctus', 'Benedictus' and 'Agnus Dei', deeming that they 'belong...to a post-Mozartian aesthetic that differs from the rest of the Requiem'. (So too then, for that matter, do the 'Amen' and Süßmayr's 'Lacrimosa' continuation – Mozart's handwriting breaks off after only eight bars.) If you were wondering how he managed to fit the 26-minute Clarinet Concerto on a single disc with the Requiem, now you know. For the concerto, Benjamin Dijkstra reconstructs both instrument and score to reach the notes we can only presume Mozart once reached (the manuscript disappeared shortly after the work was published, in an adaptation that renders it playable on the common or garden clarinet in A).

So we are presented with an incomplete Requiem. Currentzis's recording (mentioned above) presents pretty much the full Süßmayr score with the fragmentary 'Amen'; if you want boys in tune, Edward Higginbottom at New College, Oxford, is a recent contender, George Guest at King's College's near neighbour, St John's, a slightly older one. Beyer's edition has been tackled by many including, in his own unique way, Leonard Bernstein. There is still much to be said on the subject of the Requiem, 222 years after its conception. These two recordings are sure to be among the countless many that add to the debate.

David Thresher

Selected comparisons:

Guest (2/88*) (CHAN) CHAN10208

Bernstein, ed Beyer (10/89) (DG) 427 353-2GH,
 474 170-2GEN or 477 9996GM2

Currentzis (8/11) (ALPH) ALPHA178

Higginbottom (10/11) (NOVU) NCR1383

Poulenc

Stabat mater^a. *Les biches*

^a**Marlis Petersen** *sop* ^a**NDR Choir; SWR Vocal**

Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart /
Stéphane Denève

Hänssler Classic © CD93 297 (65' • DDD • T/I)

^aRecorded live at the Beethovensaal, Liederhalle
 Stuttgart, March 12-15, 2012



Denève conducts Poulenc with his new German orchestra

Poulenc performance practice, at least in this recording, has evolved well beyond the dry but clear sonorities heard in many performances from the 1950s and '60s that were either supervised by the composer or made with the benefit of breathing the same air. Here in the *Stabat mater*, the NDR Choir sounds far bigger and churchier than usual, giving this piece



Anna Leese, Stephen De Pledge (piano) and Thorsten Büttner recording Italian love songs at Champs Hill, West Sussex (see page 84)

a more secure place next to the great concert choral works from Berlioz to Verdi.

Profundity that's usually conveyed through an elegant lightish touch benefits from Stéphane Denève's heavier hand and more formidable utterance, with the music's intent fully internalised and translated into a larger sound envelope. The music takes on even more fury in the text's descriptions of the Virgin Mary's anguish. Dissonances become spine-tingling. Greater monastic weight marks descriptions of the Crucifixion – though the odd, abbreviated endings in several movements seem a tad more odd when what precedes them is so much more emphatic. The high standard of singing and playing (including soprano soloist Marlis Petersen) makes this viewpoint fully realised and completely convincing.

Les biches, Poulenc's Stravinskian ballet score, arrives complete rather than in the more typical concert suite that misrepresents the original as being predominantly breezy and chic. Well, it's not. With choral duties handled by the theatrical SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart, the seldom-heard sections have an impolite primitivism, more fearlessly outside-the-box than you'd expect from Poulenc at any stage of his career. Was he also attempting to inspire Stravinskian outrage? I strongly recommend hearing it yourself. **David Patrick Stearns**

Quilter

'The Complete Quilter Songbook, Vol 1'

Four Shakespeare Songs, Op 30. Two Songs, Op 26. A London Spring. Three Shakespeare Songs, Op 6. Trollie Lollie Laughter. Songs of Sorrow, Op 10. 'Tis Saint Valentine's Day. Hark, hark, the lark. Come Lady-Day. Come unto these yellow sands. Tell me where is fancy bred. Three Pastoral Songs, Op 22. Non nobis, Domine. Two Shakespeare Songs, Op 32. A Song at Parting. Four Child Songs, Op 5. Five Shakespeare Songs, Op 23

Mark Stone bar **Stephen Barlow** pf

Stone Records © 5060192 780253 (76' • DDD • T)



Stone begins Quilter song survey on his own label

Roger Quilter (1877-1953) was the ailing son whose brothers in a large and prosperous family all had careers either in the armed forces or in big business. Perhaps surprisingly in such a family, Roger's aim to be a composer, far from being thought unsuitable, was positively encouraged, so in the 1890s, after leaving Eton, which he hated, he went to study music at the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt, where his colleagues included Percy Grainger, Cyril Scott and Norman O'Neill. Musically they had little in common except, so it is said, their dislike of Beethoven.

Quilter soon discovered that his special gift was for writing songs, which remained his preoccupation for the rest of his life. What is striking about almost all the Shakespeare settings is that they are so original, so unlike the best-known settings of the words, yet they never sound perverse. That is in good measure due to Quilter's preference for open intervals, thirds, fourths and fifths, both in his melodies and in his harmonies.

So Quilter's setting of 'Who is Silvia?' has a curiously elongated first phrase, and 'Sigh no more, ladies' could hardly be more vigorous. 'O mistress mine' is fresh and open, and 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind' has nothing threatening about it but comes in an optimistic major key with a jolly postlude for the piano. 'Under the greenwood tree' is in a jaunty 2/4 with no hint of the compound time implied by the words, yet with no feeling of being odd: it sounds delightfully different.

Though Ernest Dowson was generally dubbed a decadent poet, the four *Songs of Sorrow* here are as fresh as any of Quilter's songs. *Three Pastoral Songs* setting words by Joseph Campbell are vigorous and straightforward: 'I will go with my father a-ploughing' is quite different from the well-known setting in a galloping 6/8 but just as effective. The *Four Child Songs* to words by

Robert Louis Stevenson are light and jaunty, with 'The Lamplighter' nicely evocative of Victorian winter evenings, tripping lightly.

Mark Stone could not be more sensitive in his response to the words with his remarkably clear diction, and his accompanist, Stephen Barlow, is comparably understanding, helped by the realistic sound quality recorded in the Champs Hill Music Room. Stone's own detailed notes on each song as well as his brief biography of Quilter ideally enhance enjoyment. An outstanding disc of English song, making one look forward to the forthcoming issues in this Quilter Songbook.

Edward Greenfield

Raskatov

'Prayers and Praise'

Obikhod. Praise

Hilliard Ensemble; Netherlands Chamber Orchestra /

Krystof Maratka

Challenge Classics © CC72578 (49' • DDD • D)



Hilliards in Holland for the post-Soviet's vocal works

The two decades since the fall of the Soviet Union have not been propitious for Russian music but Alexander Raskatov (b1953) is certainly among the most significant composers, with his completion of Schnittke's Ninth Symphony and a high-profile staging of *A Dog's Heart* by English National Opera. This disc features two ostensibly sacred works which might seem to place him within a familiar post-Soviet perspective, but *Obikhod* (2003) in particular is a decidedly oblique take on its subject: these five settings to texts from the book of common Orthodox chants evince a harmonic intricacy and, at times, rhythmic angularity such as owe less to Pärt or Alexander Knaifel than to Schnittke or the more exploratory earlier music of Penderecki. The five settings that comprise *Praise* (1998 – optional bells not included here) are outwardly more meditative in content but the monochrome textures of 'Hymn of the Cherubim', stark phrasing of 'The Lord's Prayer' or cumulative passion of 'The Angel called' hardly suggest music that was either conceived or intended for liturgical use.

Vibrant in response yet scrupulous in tonal blending, the Hilliard Ensemble are wholly committed to the cause, for all that their contribution in *Obikhod* is often submerged within the complex string textures, while the spacious yet detailed sound bears the familiar hallmarks of the Concertgebouw. English texts are included, as is an informative introduction by Ivan Moody, but the translation of Raskatov's biographical note is only too reminiscent of the 'golden age' of Melodiya LPs.

Richard Whitehouse

Saariaho

La Passion de Simone

Dawn Upshaw *sop* Tapiola Chamber Choir; Finnish

Radio Symphony Orchestra / Esa-Pekka Salonen

Online © ODE1217-5 (67' • DDD/DSD • T/D)



Saariaho's dramatic tribute to philosopher Simone Weil

You probably need to care deeply about Simone Weil in advance in order to get the most from Kaija Saariaho's beautiful yet also unremittingly earnest commemoration of her. Weil (1909–43) was a French-Jewish politico-religious philosopher with non-Party-line communist sympathies, who died in wartime London from malnutrition, apparently self-inflicted in sympathy with the sufferings of occupied France. The incompatibility between her ideals and surrounding reality places her in a line of female figures with whom Saariaho passionately identifies.

A guiding idea for the work is the polarity of light and gravity. Though the orchestral and electronic components are magically seductive, as always with this composer, both the concept and the realisation make active engagement with the texts virtually a prerequisite.

Saariaho's music carries me with it in more or less direct proportion to the distance it keeps from the spoken word. That's to say that its instrumental sections are more consistently engaging than the somewhat tortuous solo and choral writing, which in turn I find easier to take than the spoken declamations that appear in most of the 15 movements (or 'stations'). Dawn Upshaw does as much with the demanding vocal lines as anyone could expect of her, and Salonen and his forces keep everything in sharp focus.

Online's informative booklet directs us to a site illustrating the 2012 choreographed concert performances, with back-projections, from which this excellent recording is taken – barriere.org/LaPassiondeSimone-visual.html. That visual dimension strikes me as an entirely appropriate complement to a score that was originally performed in 2006 in a staged version directed by Peter Sellars. Is it too much to hope that one of those events was recorded for DVD? David Fanning

'Deutsche Motette'

Brahms O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf, Op 74

No 2^a Cornelius Liebe, Op 18^b Rheinberger

Abendlied, Op 69 No 3^a Schubert Gott ist mein Hirt,

D706^c Schumann Vier doppelchörige Gesänge,

Op 141^a Strauss Deutsche Motette, Op 62^d

^dHelen Massey *sop* ^dKate Symonds-Joy *contr*

^dWilliam Kendall *ten* ^dTim Mirfin *bass* ^cDavid Ward *fp*

Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge;

Choir of King's College London /

^{ac}Geoffrey Webber, ^{bd}David Trendell

Delphian © DCD34124 (62 • DDD • T/D)

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Richafort reissued: Paul Van Nevel and the Huelgas Ensemble's recording makes it back into the catalogue



Delphian releases the fruits of this month's Session Report

A concerto for choir by any other name, Richard Strauss's *Deutsche Motette* has a good claim to being the hardest piece of tonal music in the choral repertoire. Splitting its singers into 20 parts, stretching them across a four-octave range and climaxing in a fugue of monumental complexity, it's a work not often recorded and still less frequently heard in concert. Strauss's mystical ecstasy is a world away from the soft-focus salon piety of Schubert's *Gott ist mein Hirt* and Brahms's Lutheran chorale motet *O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf*, which bookend a broad-ranging collage disc of German Romantic choral works.

These are young voices from two discrete ensembles, and their blend doesn't approach the hazy vocal mesh of either the Danish National Radio Choir or the superb Latvian Radio Choir recordings. Control is also at issue; the tensions and climaxes of Strauss's epic-in-miniature are the product as much of restraint and denial as of release. When the singers give so much, something, paradoxically, is lost here. A quartet of professional soloists amplify but never obscure choral textures that maintain impressive clarity through the dense contrapuntal writing.

While Rheinberger's pillowy *Abendlied* feels similarly overworked, the frank, forward tone of this ensemble softens the academic rigidity of the Brahms and makes a surprise highlight of Peter Cornelius's *Liebe*, with its carefully contrasted sequence of moods and tone-colours. A fortepiano cameo in the Schubert offers aural respite from so much richness – the welcome jangle of secular society briefly obtruding into the German Romantic world of mystical abstraction. **Alexandra Coghlan**

Strauss – selected comparisons:

Danish Nat Rad Ch, Parkman (5/94) (CHAN) CHAN9223
Accentus, Latvian Rad Ch, Equilbey (3/10) (NAIV) V5194

'Songs of Love'

Bellini Il fervido. Dolente immagine. Vaga luna. La farfaletta. Ma rendi **Donizetti** Sull'onda cheta e bruna. Amiamo **Puccini** Terra e mare. È l'uccellino. Storiella d'amore. Sole e amore **Savioni** Fugga fugg'amor^a **Tosti** Sogno. Non t'amo più. Ideale. Luna d'estate

Anna Leese sop ^a**Thorsten Büttner** ten

Stephen De Pledge pf

Champs Hill © CHRCDO50 (48' • DDD • T/t)



Italian song from the former ROH Young Artist

The distinctive voice of Anna Leese – a gleaming soprano, like a pure beam of light – has become a familiar feature of London's musical life in recent years and is making a promising career in opera, for which this Italian song recital is an attractive advertisement. The Music Room at Champs Hill adds quite an acoustic bloom to a voice that already has a lot of overtones – everything here is luminescent, like the sun at its radiant midday height.

The programme covers a century of Italian song. The ariettas of Bellini, naive and straightforward, do not offer the singer a lot of scope but Leese sings them with a fine *legato* and just enough attention to the words. Puccini's songs are more ambitious, at least insofar as they reach out to his operas: 'Terra e mare' has something of the aching sadness of *Suor Angelica* and 'Sole e amore' was the embryo for part of *La bohème*. Leese, skilfully accompanied by Stephen De Pledge, rises to their larger scale easily, and in her Tosti group goes further, finding some tender colours in her voice. A rather odd encore is included – an *aria antiche* duet – but the disc still lasts less

than 48 minutes. Its prime interest is as a pointer to the future, and some *bel canto* roles must surely be on the cards. **Richard Fairman**

'Tributes to Josquin Desprez'

Appenzeller Musae Jovis a 4 Gombert Musae

Jovis a 6 **Josquin Desprez** Salve regina.

Nymphes, nappés **Jacquet de Mantua**

Dum vastos Adriae fluctus **Vinders**

O mors inevitabilis **Richafort** Requiem

King's Singers

Signum © SIGCD326 (58' • DDD • T/t)

Richafort

Requiem. Laetamini in Domino. Sufficiebat nobis paupertas. Salve regina. Ne vous chaille mon coeur.

Tru Tru Trut avant. Il n'est si douce vie

Huelgas Ensemble / Paul Van Nevel

Harmonia Mundi © HMA195 1730 (61' • DDD)

From HMC90 1730 (10/02)



Richafort's Requiem reissued and the focus of a King's Singers Josquin tribute

It is heartening that the King's Singers should devote themselves to a work as comparatively obscure as Jean Richafort's Requiem. Equally heartening is it that this presumed memorial to Josquin should now boast three recordings of a very high standard. The King's Singers' programme replicates nearly exactly that of Cinquecento, issued just a year ago (Hyperion, A/12). Both present the work alongside other tributes to the great master by Vinders, Appenzeller and Gombert. The new disc also includes a less well-known offering by Jacquet of Mantua that manages to string together a few 'soundclips' from Josquin's greatest hits: that this approach is particularly topical today only adds to the appeal.

As though on cue, Harmonia Mundi has reissued the Huelgas Ensemble's recording of the work in a rather less coherent programme entirely devoted to the composer. When only this was available, one had to make do with Paul Van Nevel's eccentric decision to double certain voices at the octave, for which the beauty of the Huelgas sound doesn't quite compensate. You might say that it's easier to accept it now that two other recordings exist, which both play things much straighter. These are nicely contrasted in timbre, Cinquecento darker and more burnished, the King's Singers clearer and brighter. I'd suggest Cinquecento's timbre and previous experience better suit them to the repertoire and that their local decisions are better judged: the final turn to triple time in the Gombert, for instance, is a little too jaunty with the King's Singers. In short, each of these recordings is worthy, in its own way, of a deeply involving and inventive piece: I'm grateful to have heard all three. **Fabrice Fitch**

GRAMOPHONE *Reissues*

MENDELSSOHN IN STUTTGART

Philip Clark finds that a package containing both Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *St Paul* is just what he needs to feed his obsession with the composer



Ideal Mendelssohn: Frieder Bernius, the Stuttgart Chamber Choir and Kammerphilharmonie Bremen

A few years ago I met Mendelssohn on the road to Damascus. Actually it wasn't Damascus at all, rather the Philharmonie in Cologne, where I'd been dispatched from *Gramophone* HQ to review a fancy new orchestral work by a composer who had better remain nameless. His piece did everything you'd expect a mainstream contemporary orchestral piece to do. Slithery chromatics and ritzy catwalk orchestration decorated the air for 12 minutes. Job done. Courteous applause. After the interval, I resisted my instinct to disappear into the night and stayed to hear Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And I'm pleased I did. The vivaciousness and nerve of his harmonic language put that first-half composer to shame. It was Mendelssohn, despite the utter familiarity of every note, who offered something new, the sound of surprise.

That experience replayed itself through my mind's ear when this boxed-up reissue of Mendelssohn's two landmark oratorios, *Elijah* and *St Paul*, with fragments of the unfinished *Christus*, arrived in the post. Mendelssohn had already become something of an obsession and I was always going to have to tackle the oratorios eventually; one thing was for certain though – I wasn't much interested in the 'English' *Elijah*, Gothic Victorianism intoned in English. I'd previously tried Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos with his dreamboat cast, including Janet Baker and Dietrich

'This is choral singing to make you feel the space above your head'

Fischer-Dieskau, but found it too solemn and stuffy. Meanwhile Robert Shaw, with Thomas Hampson, Barbara Bonney et al on Telarc, felt too much like *Elijah! The Musical*. Very savvy choral singing, naturally, from the Atlanta Symphony Chorus but somehow not solemn enough.

Taking a middle path – for which don't read middle-of-the-road – through that interpretative imponderable, these Stuttgart-based recordings by Frieder Bernius are ideal. Reviewing the original issue of *St Paul* in September 2008, John Steane tagged it as 'the one I feel most content to live with' and I concur; who would I be not to? This is early-period Mendelssohn, Handel often overriding Bach, with a clear division of dramatic weight between its two parts, the second a lyrical meditation on the dramatic tumult of the opening. Bernius's tempi are pacy, his rhythms driven and resolute. After a beautifully judged Overture – listen to the canny infusion of strings and bassoon in the opening bars and how Bernius gradually cranks up the momentum – the opening chorus, 'Herr, der du bist der Gott', keeps threatening to mutate into *Zadok the Priest*. The tone of the performance, though, is set: full-bodied choral singing judiciously

balanced against a sensitively blended palette of prime orchestral colour.

The Argentinian soprano María Cristina Kiehr tackles both the soprano and alto parts; the aria 'Doch der Herr vergisst der Seinen nicht', alto normally, becomes hers and nothing is lost in terms of enunciation or tone. Bernius allays fears that Part 2, devoid of the dramatic kick of what's gone before, might drag. Werner Güra (tenor) and Michael Volle (bass) sing the duo 'So sind wir nun Botschafter an Christi Statt' with such a profound sense of awe that we're drawn irresistibly back.

Güra and Volle return for *Elijah*, performed originally in English in Birmingham but now thankfully shorn of expressive assumptions and Victorian mannerism. Volle's opening recit, 'So wahr der Herr, der Gott Israels, lebet', has the ominous immediacy of rolling news: 'BREAKING NEWS – Drought in Israel, population cursed.' Bernius lends the fugal Overture churning tension, lines jangled, heady times.

Philippe Herreweghe's period-instrument performance with La Chapelle Royale, Collegium Vocale and the Champs-Élysées Orchestra on Harmonia Mundi for me lacks this essential immediacy and compassion. I like the way Bernius, in the chorus 'Aber der Herr sieht es nicht', with its lines 'His curse hath fallen down upon us / His wrath will pursue us till he destroy us!', directly invokes the opening of the piece: all the confusion, the darkness and sheer disorientation. Soprano Letizia Scherrer's lament as her son is dying, 'Was hast du an mir getan, du Mann Gottes!', is the emotional apex of this first section. Part 2 shines a gradual light into the darkness, Bernius imperceptibly tweaking the dimmer switch. The finale blares with sunny delight: choral singing to make you feel the space above your head.

The various mysteries and enigmas surrounding the fragments of *Christus* are told with gusto by Mendelssohn scholar R Larry Todd in his excellent booklet-notes – whether Mendelssohn had intended to call a third oratorio *Christus* is under doubt. But the music itself is even more fascinating than the back story. Conventional harmonic syntax is often pushed to the point of collapse. What a pity he never finished. His language was, again, on the move, destinations unknown. **G**

THE RECORDING



Mendelssohn *St Paul, Elijah, Christus*
Stuttgart Chbr Ch / Frieder Bernius
Carus © 4 CARUS83 021



Mike Ashman on an Italian staging of Britten's masterpiece:
'An outstanding Grimes of our time and the clearest evocation of the scares and terrors that lie beneath the work' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 86**



David Vickers compares two homages to Faustina Bordoni:
'Invernizzi's recital and Genaux's tribute are chalk and cheese – but both are musically indispensable' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 89**

Bellini

Norma

Cecilia Bartoli *mez.* **Norma**
Sumi Jo *sop.* **Adalgisa**
John Osborn *ten.* **Pollione**
Michele Pertusi *bass.* **Oroveso**
Reinaldo Macias *ten.* **Flavio**
Liliana Nikiteanu *mez.* **Clotilde**

International Chamber Vocalists:

Orchestra La Scintilla / Giovanni Antonini

Decca (F) ② 478351-7DH2 (143' • DDD • S/T/t)



Refreshed instrumentation and casting for Bartoli's Norma

The impossible masterpieces of the 19th century supposedly have no challenges that can't be solved by a hard look at the piece's original circumstances. And that's what Bartoli and conductor Giovanni Antonini have done with the *bel canto* opera that has broken many operatic hearts in recent decades. So few singers have commanded the title-role since Maria Callas and Montserrat Caballé that you have to ask if there's something wrong with the opera's mechanism. To that end, Bartoli reverses the voice types of the leading roles, citing the historic precedent of mezzo Maria Malibran as Norma and soprano Giulia Grisi as Adalgisa. Here, it works.

Aided by an original-instrument band that tunes to 430Hz, Bartoli floats soprano-range notes but with a mezzo timbre that suits the priestess Norma's age and Medea-like temperament. Lyric soprano Sumi Jo sounds like the classic younger woman who has caught the attention of Pollione – portrayed by John Osborn, a tenor of Rossini lightness who projects such a different heroic flavour. Musicologists can debate the merits of the Biondi/Minasi critical edition but under Antonini's volatile direction the lean, penetrating sonority of the orchestra makes a good case for the score's big operatic effects as well as its less imposing marches and processions. This is an important addition to the *Norma* discography.

All too rarely, though, does Bartoli spin a lyric line with simple expressiveness. Though Norma's leave-taking of her children is some of her best-ever singing, her 'Casta diva' is fussy,

and much else is overwrought and mannered. In ensembles, she sings louder and faster than her colleagues. But Bartoli is the best current Norma out there. And with the booklet's high-style photos of her resembling a meticulously dishevelled Anna Magnani, Bartoli may be rather more convincing on stage.

David Patrick Stearns

Britten

Peter Grimes

John Graham-Hall *ten.* **Peter Grimes**
Susan Gritton *sop.* **Ellen Orford**
Christopher Purves *bar.* **Balstrode**
Felicity Palmer *contr.* **Auntie**
Peter Hoare *ten.* **Bob Boles**
Daniel Okulitch *bass.* **Swallow**
Catherine Wyn-Rogers *mez.* **Mrs Sedley**
George von Bergen *bar.* **Ned Keene**
Christopher Gillett *ten.* **Rev Horace Adams**
Stephen Richardson *bass.* **Hobson**
Ida Falk Winland *sop.* **Niece I**
Simona Mihai *sop.* **Niece II**

Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan /

Robin Ticciati

Stage director **Richard Jones**

Video director **Patrizia Carmine**

Opus Arte (F) DVD OA1103D; (F) OABD7119D

(154' + 14' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • O • s)

Recorded live, June 2012. Extra features: Interviews with Robin Ticciati, John Graham-Hall, Sarah Fahie and Richard Jones; Cast Gallery



Jones and Ticciati's 'British' Grimes filmed at La Scala

Even a decade ago a truly modern production of a British opera by a Brit team and with many Brits in the cast would have been almost unthinkable in Milan. Judging by some sustained booing at curtain call, some still feel like that – but Stéphane Lissner's determined Intendanship has finally brought contemporary international music theatre to Italy's premiere house.

This 2012 *Grimes* is set in a town of today with bright, crude dayglo colours, plentiful model seagulls – that's intentionally all we really get of the sea – and a rash of St George's flags for the Act 3 Moot Hall dance. While noting that traditionalists may feel deprived of

fishing boats and nets – precisely one rope appears when Grimes sings about it in Act 1 – I do not wish to distract with more details of an updating which takes us to around the 1980s, because the pride and joy of Richard Jones's production, not to be missed, is its unerring grasp of the psychology and tiered relationship of all the characters. This goes far beyond the fact that the 'nieces' are tarty girls on the make who've perhaps smoked too many spliffs, that Keene is a mixture of dealer and game-show host (his every gesture copied from TV) or that Grimes himself, a massive performance from John Graham-Hall, is a stressed-out obsessive/depressive with shaking hands and head. When he tells the boy 'Look, the whole sea's boiling', we know (tragically) there's not a single fish to be seen.

The handling of the so-important chorus part as a tribal unit, often twitching and dancing in an unnaturalistic manner (try the run-up to the climactic manhunt cries of 'Peter Grimes' in Act 3), is a major, original achievement for Jones and his movement director Sarah Fahie. In the pit Robin Ticciati's conducting and musical interpretation closely back what Jones and Fahie and designer Stewart Laing are doing. Ticciati eschews the weighty, rather Germanic approach of older conductors to this score (Britten himself, Colin Davis), concentrating (like Goodall or Hickox) on rhythmic and instrumental subtleties and the sheer reason why the music is like it is. This storm (midway through Act 1) won't blow your head off with sheer decibels but it will with its musical development.

Sound is good, picture ditto but I think the frequent cut-away shots taken from high stage gallery left – a view that only the ghosts of 18th-century noble patrons would have – are a waste. Hugely recommended; certainly, alongside David Pountney's Zurich production (another expat creation), an outstanding *Grimes* of our time and the clearest evocation of the scares and terrors that lie beneath the work.

And watch closely at the very end. **Mike Ashman**

Selected comparisons:

Britten (10/59⁸, 4/86⁸) (DECC) 475 7713DOR2

Goodall (2/94⁸) (EMI) 029006-2

Hickox (5/96) (CHAN) CHAN9447

C Davis (8/04) (LSO) LSO0054



Obsessive and depressive: John Graham-Hall as Peter Grimes and Francesco Malvuccio as his apprentice at La Scala, Milan

Mysliveček

Medonte

Thomas Michael Allen *ten*.....Medonte
 Juanita Lascarro *sop*.....Selene
 Susanne Bernhard *sop*.....Arsace
 Sipiwe McKenzie Edelmänn *sop*.....Evandro
 Loriana Castellano *mez*.....Zelinda
 Ulrike Andersen *contr*.....Talete
 L'Arte del Mondo / Werner Ehrhardt
 Deutsche Harmonia Mundi © 2 88697 86124-2
 (116' • DDD)
 Recorded live 2010



Penultimate opera seria from Mozart's Czech contemporary

It is the unenviable fate of any composer who was active in the 1770s to be compared to Mozart. In the case of Josef Mysliveček (1737-81) this is a double certainty as he was a friend of Mozart: the two met in Bologna in 1770 and several times afterwards, and Mozart made fond mentions of the older composer in correspondence – though alas most memorably to describe the unfortunate condition of his face following treatment for the syphilis inevitable from his lifestyle.

It is mainly Mysliveček's instrumental works that have survived into modern times, and from these he usually emerges from comparison well. His vocal music is less familiar: the oratorio *Abramo ed Isacco* has been recorded a few times (but then it was once thought to be by Mozart) and the opera *Bellerofonte* made a solitary

appearance on CD in the early 1990s.

This recording of *Medonte*, the 26th of his 27 *opere serie*, long forgotten since inexplicably bombing at its premiere in Rome in 1780, is therefore still in pioneer territory.

Recorded live in concert in Leverkusen in 2010, it shows Mysliveček to be a composer of strength and energy, a drawer of wide-spanned but shapely and grateful vocal lines whose resemblance to Mozart's cannot be ignored. True, he does not approach the poignancy and depth of Mozart – the virtuoso vigour of his arias is better suited to expressions of courage, anger and defiance than subtler emotions – but he has the same warmth and buoyancy and the same ability to thrill with sheer vocal allure.

All of which makes *Medonte* an enjoyable listen, in spite of a weak plot not worth outlining here. The performance has verve, and though it has no big names the cast is well up to its task, even if some of the ladies are hard to tell apart at times. My favourite was Susanne Bernhard, rich and clear as leading man Arsace. Thomas Michael Allen as Medonte is hardly your honeyed Mozartian tenor, but then he is the petulant bad guy here; and while Juanita Lascarro is impressive as heroine Selene, the role itself would have benefited from a lighter and more vulnerable-sounding voice. The period-instrument orchestra are vividly led by Classical specialist Werner Ehrhardt. The live recording comes with the odd footfall, page-turn and audible edit, but certainly not enough to spoil things. **Lindsay Kemp**

Poulenc

La voix humaine

Dame Felicity Lott *sop* Graham Johnson *pf*
 Champs Hill © 2 (DVD + SACD) CHRBRO45
 Video director Steve Plant
 (41' • NTSC • 16:9 • PCM stereo • 0 • T/t)

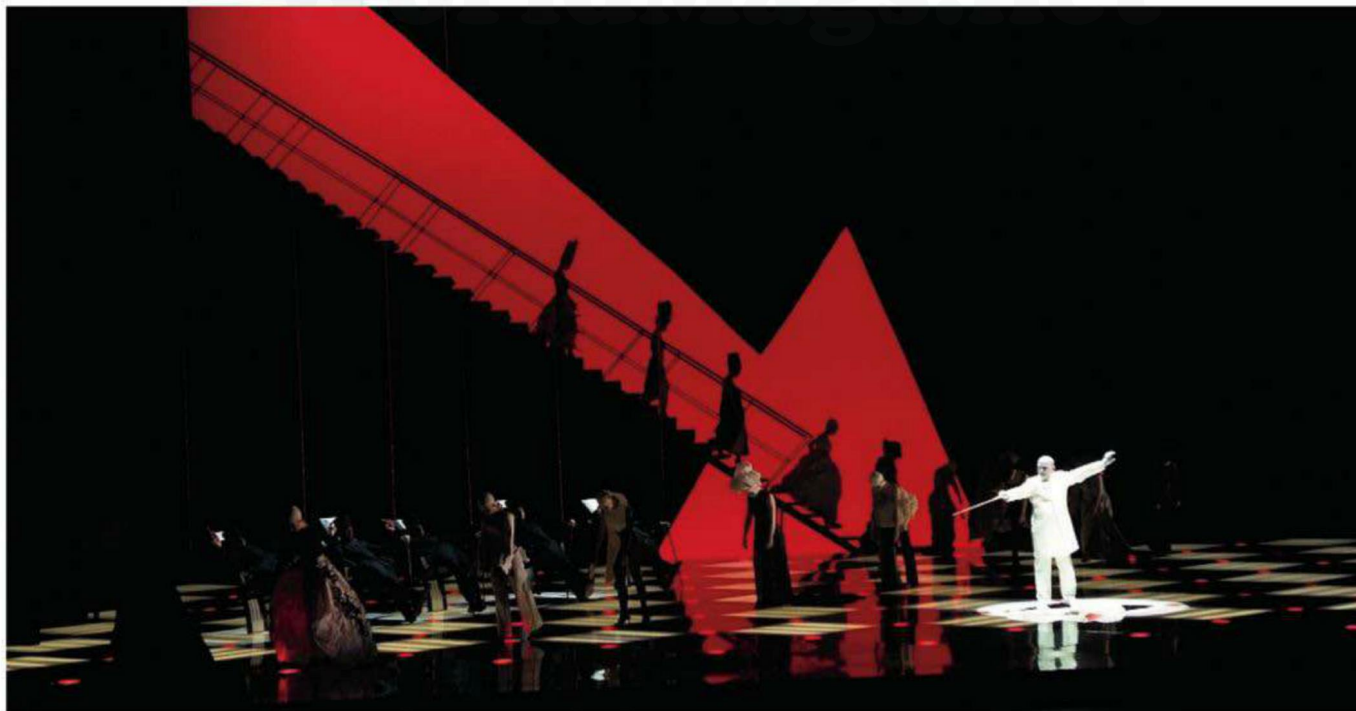


Lott on film for piano-accompanied La voix

Poulenc and his estate never let others do it (officially) until now but the composer himself could never resist accompanying his favourite Denise Duval in part or all of his telephone opera. The advantage of a piano over (or alongside) the orchestration is one of intimate recital-room contact between soprano and single keyboard, and between that music source and the performer's acted emotion. The already exposed view of 'Elle' on the phone to her unseen and unheard deserting lover is subjected to even closer X-ray.

Lott and Johnson are a natural choice for this venture. Much of the opera calls for the saying of one thing while acting another. So it's easy neither to bring off the range of emotion called for nor to scale and pace it appropriately. Lott brings this off with huge fluency in one small, attractively lit studio (Paris mid-20th-century 'period') with the camera(s) seemingly only a headbutt away. No stage director is credited, only a producer.

Use the FF 15-second button (if you have one) on your Blu-ray and the silent end-of-pier-



Colourful symbolism: Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin staged by Mariusz Trelński in Valencia

style film jump cuts of Lott show her 200 per cent involvement and concentration. The feeling, from Johnson's vivid, emotive accompaniment too, is very 'live' – this is not a performance in which minuscule errors needed to be corrected. Sound and picture are both first-class, and the release comes with Blu-ray, DVD, bilingual libretto and good booklet-notes. **Mike Ashman**

Rossini

La gazza ladra

Paolo Bordogna *bar*..... Fabrizio Vinogradito
 Kleopatra Papatheologou *mez*..... Lucia
 Dmitry Korchak *ten*..... Giannetto
 Mariola Cantarero *sop*..... Ninetta
 Alex Esposito *bass-bar*..... Fernando
 Michele Pertusi *bass-bar*..... Gottardo (Il Podestà)
 Manuela Custer *mez*..... Pippo
 Stefan Cifoletti *ten*..... Isacco
 Cosimo Panozzo *ten*..... Antonio
 Vittorio Prato *bar*..... Giorgio
 Matteo Ferrara *bass-bar*..... Ernesto
 Prague Chamber Choir; Bolzano and Trento Haydn
 Orchestra / Lü Jia
 Dynamic ③ CDS567 (3h 12' • DDD • S)
 Recorded live at the Rossini Opera Festival,
 Adriatic Arena, Pesaro, August 2007.
 From DVD 33567, Blu-ray 55567



Now on three audio discs,
 Pesaro's 2007 Magpie

Damiano Michieletto's Pesaro Festival production of Rossini's richly imagined domestic *melodramma* was generally despaired of when it was first seen in 2007. Set in a police

state, the default position for any director who's run out of ideas or who deems his audience too thick to recognise evil when they see it, it was conceived as the dream of an illegal immigrant who imagines she is the thieving magpie. The action took place on a set dominated by outsize tubular candles deployed like guns on a battle cruiser.

The production was released on DVD in 2008 but this is its first appearance on CD, a more desirable medium, you might think, if the opera is your principal concern. It is certainly decently cast. That few of the cast make any real mark may or may not be a result of their being driven out of their own and their character's comfort zones by the production. Given the physical state they were in in the Act 2 prison scene, it says much for Mariola Cantarero and Alex Esposito that they bring the great father-daughter scene off as well as they do.

The performance is at its best in the second act as the prison and trial scenes give way to the march to the scaffold of the hapless peasant girl and the story's joyous *Fidelio*-like release. Even here, however, the conducting of Lü Jia has a tendency to come and go. A rather tame recording doesn't help focus our attention.

Chandos's 2002 English studio version is in a different league to this. The cast is consistently superb and David Parry is by some distance the superior conductor, both in his support of the singers and in his ability to drive forward the action. Daniel Slater's original Garsington production was in Italian but Chandos's English-language makeover is in the capable hands of Jeremy Sams. It works pretty well.

The best Italian-language version, if you can track down a copy, is an earlier Pesaro recording (Sony, 10/90) conducted by Gianluigi Gelmetti. That came complete with text and translations. The new Dynamic set comes with synopsis only. **Richard Osborne**

Selected comparison:

Parry (10/03) (CHAN) CHAN3097

Tchaikovsky

Eugene Onegin

Artur Ruciński *bar*..... Eugene Onegin
 Kristine Opolais *sop*..... Tatyana
 Dmitry Korchak *ten*..... Lensky
 Lena Belkina *mez*..... Olga
 Günther Groissböck *bass*..... Prince Gremin
 Helene Schneiderman *mez*..... Larina
 Margarita Nekrasova *mez*..... Filipyevna
 Emilio Sánchez *ten*..... Triquet
 Aldo Heo *bar*..... Captain
 Simon Lim *bass*..... Zaretsky
 Chorus and Orchestra of the Generalitat Valenciana /
 Omer Meir Wellber

Stage director **Mariusz Trelński**

Video director **Tiziano Mancini**

C Major Entertainment ② ② DVD 712408; ② Blu-ray
 712504 (150' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS-HC MA5.1, DTS5.1 &
 PCM stereo • O • s)

Recorded live at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia,
 Valencia, 2011



Opolais stars in Trelński's
 2011 Onegin from Valencia

This recent Polish/Spanish co-production has us view the opera (like Pushkin's novel) through the eyes of Onegin in old age. His vampire-like

attraction to and for Tatyana is played – in excessive, camp, slow-motion mode – by the show's choreographer Emil Wesolowski. Were it not for the star-is-born presence of Latvian soprano Kristīne Opolais (Tatyana), this extra would steal or upstage every scene. Around Wesolowski, Treliński essays a relatively straightforward ground production, interrupted by colourful, symbolist and (again, Wesolowski's) slow stylised movement at the Larina and Petersburg balls. There is much sexually symbolic overuse of apples, of Tatyana being stabbed by Olegin's cane and of acting on the orchestra pit rail.

It has to be said that the production as filmed here is not in great shape either musically or dramatically. The chorus dancing and movement are poor, some of their singing in the 'Pelt him gaily with your fruit' and Larina party choruses should have been retaken and Meir Wellber's tendency to drag for emotional effect is not always appreciated by soloists and orchestra. Filipyevna, Zaretsky and Captain Petrovich look at the pit for leads an awful lot.

On the main stage, Opolais's Tatyana is the stuff of dreams musically and acting-wise, Korchak's Lensky and Groissböck's Gremin most effective and Ruciński's dark Olegin a handsome voice that sounds a size too small for the role in a big house (his acting ditto). Musically the production is based on the first, much chorus-reduced version that Tchaikovsky premiered at the Conservatory, so no peasants-gathering corn Act 1 chorus and dance, nor Act 3 Ecossaise. (All this is loss apart from the rather Brechtian recitative that precedes the Gremins' arrival at the Petersburg ball.)

Sound is good, filming effective, but the endless presence of over-the-top senior Olegin is quite a passion-killer. It's unfortunate that this DVD appears so soon in the wake of the Kasper Holten's Royal Opera production which makes such poetry out of Olegin and Tatyana looking back on their not-quite romance. Hopefully the reviews that greeted that production will not preclude a DVD release into a catalogue not overstocked with compelling filmed *Olegins*.

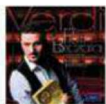
Mike Ashman

Verdi

Rigoletto – Ella mi fu rapita!...Parmi veder le lagrime. **Il trovatore** – Soli or siamo...Condotta ell'era in ceppi; Mal reggendoe all'aspro assalto... Inoltra il piè; Ah! sì, ben mio coll'essere. **I Lombardi** – La mia letizia infondere. **Aida** – Se quel guerrier io fossi!...Celeste Aida. **La traviata** – Lunge da lei...De' miei bollenti spiriti. **Macbeth** – O figli, o figli miei!... Ah, la paterna mano. **Un ballo in maschera** – Forse la soglia attinse. **Don Carlo** – È lui...O mio Rodrigo. Dio, che nell'alma infondere. **Les vêpres siciliennes** – C'est Guy de Montfort...O jour de paine. Requiem – Ingemisco

Piotr Beczala ten with Ewa Podleś contr

Karol Kozłowski ten Mariusz Kwiecien bar
Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Łukasz Borowicz
Orfeo © C865 131A (68' • DDD)



Bicentenary arias from rising Polish tenor Piotr Beczala

This disc, recorded piecemeal in Warsaw over four months in 2011/12, is not an example of how to enliven and rework the format of the solo recital album. London, New York and home cinema audiences all now know that Beczala has a handsome voice and presence; he has little to prove. But the performances collected here sound like he is introducing himself to us 12 times in succession, making sure we 'get' the power and agility of his voice.

Of the individuality or dramatic situation of these nine Verdi characters (and the Requiem) we get but little impression. The two duets sound like they are being read straight off the page by Beczala's partners: we don't know what Podleś's hooty Azucena wants from this particular Manrico, or hear how she is getting it. Kwiecien's Rodrigo in the *Don Carlo* excerpt is in good voice but it appears that neither he, Beczala nor maestro Borowicz have agreed where and how they're going to hold back or push forward. So this watershed moment – friends reunited but, in so doing, actually swearing disloyalty to the country they serve – is awkward and bumpy. Faster moments of anger ('Ella mi fu rapita'), concern ('Lunge da lei') or love ('Ah sì, ben mio') are delivered purely with a generalised vigour but hardly any of the individual *tinta* crafted by the composer. Perfectly adequate sound and balance but it's almost ironic that Orfeo's booklet-note concentrates so much on dramatic characterisation. Mike Ashman

'A Tribute to Faustina Bordoni'

Handel Alessandro – Lusinghe più care. *Floridante*/ *Radamisto* – Parmi che giunta in porto. Tolomeo – Ti pentirai, crudel Hasse Artaserse – Va tra le selve Ircane. Cajo Fabricio – Padre ingiusto. Il Ciro riconosciuto – Overture; Quel nome se ascolto. *Didone abbandonata* – Overture. Numa Pompilio – Qual di voi...Piange quel fonte. Zenobia – Overture; Ah! Che mancar mi sento
Vivica Genaux mez
Cappella Gabetta / Andrés Gabetta
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi © 88691 94459-2
(67' • DDD • T/t)

'I viaggi di Faustina'

Bononcini Rosiclea in Dania – Lasciami un sol momento Mancini Traiano – Sinfonia; Canta e di caro usignolo; Spera sì, mio caro bene Porpora Agrippina – Sinfonia. Poro – Raggio amico di speranza; Son prigioniera d'amore Sarro Partenope – Tortora che il suo bene. Flute Concerto Vinci Catone in Utica – Confusa, smarrita; Non ti minaccio

sdegno. Il trionfo di Camilla – Scendi da questo soglio; Un guardo solo ancor. Cantata, 'Parto ma con qual core' – Ecco mi parto

Roberta Invernizzi sop I Turchini / Antonio Florio
Glossa © CDD922606 (67' • DDD)



Genaux and Invernizzi offer tributes to Handel favourite Faustina Bordoni

Faustina Bordoni was one half of Handel's so-called 'Rival Queens' for just under three seasons (1726-28), and in 1730 she married Hasse in Venice – so Vivica Genaux's recital of arias for Faustina by Handel and Hasse is such an obviously sensible idea that it's amazing it hasn't been done before. Quantz praised Faustina's immaculate articulation and excellent trills – and Genaux lives up to that vocal artistry brilliantly with the copious trills and arching melodic phrases in the long but lovely 'Piange quel fonte' from Hasse's *Numa Pompilio*. Hasse gets the lion's share and the recital concludes with the elderly husband's touching tribute to his wife composed after her death in 1781, 'Ah! Che mancar mi sento'. Handel's best dramatic creations for Faustina are not chosen and there are manifold deficiencies in the booklet-notes. The florid 'Parmi che giunta in porto' is not from Handel's 1720 *Radamisto*, as the track-listing states, but is a bona fide rarity composed for Faustina in the 1727 revival of *Floridante* (later used in the 1728 revival of *Radamisto*). Cappella Gabetta accompany with considerable warmth and judicious elegance, and their horns have a great time in the splendid overture to Hasse's *Didone abbandonata*. I cannot remember enjoying Genaux's singing more than this.

Roberta Invernizzi digs deeply and less predictably into unfamiliar repertoire performed by Faustina during numerous successful engagements at Naples between 1721 and 1732; there are also a few arias by Neapolitan composers she performed at Parma and Turin. I Turchini's recorders dulcetly evoke a nightingale in 'Canta e di caro usignolo' from Mancini's *Traiano*, and Invernizzi's beautiful slow singing and the sensitive string band are breathtaking in the siciliano 'Un guardo solo ancor' from Vinci's *Il trionfo di Camilla*. There is only an extract from Vinci's *Parto ma con qual core*, written for Faustina to bid farewell to her Naples audience in 1723. Glossa's volume launches an ambitious new series entitled 'Sirens', exploring the musical journeys of celebrated Baroque singers; the booklet contains an essay, illustrations and even a comprehensive chronology of Faustina's entire career. The conceptual scope, repertoire and integrity of documentation for Invernizzi's intelligent recital and Genaux's affectionate tribute are chalk and cheese – but both are musically indispensable. David Vickers



Rob Cowan greets a chronicle of music banned by the Nazis: *'This beautifully written book places the tortuous advance of Austro-German anti-Semitism in a musical context'*



Colin Anderson reads the letters of Benjamin Britten's final decade: *'The final letter to be included is from Peter Pears, a poignant report that Britten is "slowly fading"'*

Forbidden Music

The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis

By Michael Haas

Yale UP London, HB, 336pp, £25

ISBN 978-0-30015-430-6



'My parents were deported from Nice in the autumn of 1943, first into the notorious camp at Drancy. From there, we lost track. I hope they didn't have to suffer too much.' The words are George Szell's, written to the composer Hans Gál on May 30, 1946. The tragic acceptance in Szell's tone, his characteristic reserve and, in another letter from a few days later, his candid confession that 'I haven't the slightest sense of nostalgia for my former corner of the world' typify two aspects of this revelatory study that will haunt you long after the closing images of Korngold's heart-rending return home have faded: namely pathos and loss.

Michael Haas's greatest achievement as a recording producer was as the prime mover behind Decca's groundbreaking Entartete Musik ('Degenerate Music') series, a venture that died long before its time, and my only regret is that *Forbidden Music* didn't come first. If it had, then perhaps interest in (and support for) the recording venture would have survived a little longer.

This is in essence a beautifully written history book that places the tortuous advance of Austro-German anti-Semitism in a musical context, starting with the 19th century and leading through two world wars to the Cold War, and the shocking but predictable fact that even the horrors of the Holocaust did little to stem the flood of racist bile among (largely) ex-Nazi agitators. Making music has always been central to the Jewish psyche, and the fact that gifted Jewish composers were deemed dispensable by the Nazis on racial grounds not only threw hundreds of lives into disarray (or worse) but deprived the German people themselves of much that is artistically rich. Haas's enterprise aims at redressing the balance in memory of a lost generation.

As to stated attitudes, one only has to read the works of the noted American cultural

and literary historian Sander Gilman to learn how through the centuries Jewish self-esteem has had its highs and lows, and Haas's book is full of what at first glance might seem like contradictory attitudes from various Jewish musicians and intellectuals. Some of the most interesting observations relate to Mahler, especially those from Erich Wolfgang Korngold's feared and revered critic-father, Julius. 'If [Richard] Strauss sounds cacophonous by cleverness and contrariness,' wrote Korngold senior, 'Mahler sounds cacophonous by conviction.' This and many other telling aperçus ring partial truths. Another commentator who had interesting things to say about Mahler was the writer Adolf Weissmann who, like Korngold and Mahler himself, was Jewish, and yet who felt prompted to write '...this Jewish blood is important. Always heated, it attempts a great deal while rarely scaling great heights. It pushes towards dispersion as easily as it pushes towards cohesion.' Again, the shadowy spectre of Jewish self-doubt.

References to well-known figures from all walks of life, many of them supportive of the Jewish cause (and some unexpectedly not), are legion. There are the ludicrous claims printed in the Nazi *Lexikon der Juden in der Musik*, and substantial passages about such partially forgotten figures as Mischa Spoliansky (a film music composer who also happened to accompany Richard Tauber in his abridged *Winterreise* recording), Egon Wellesz, Ernst Toch (composer of fine symphonies and music for Bob Hope comedies), Viktor Ullmann, Berthold Goldschmidt, various composers miraculously active in the Nazi ghetto-transit camp at Theresienstadt (or Terezín) and the political hardliner Hanns Eisler, not to mention the inception of the hugely popular German Jewish Cultural League. The Second Viennese School and various issues arising from it are central to Haas's enterprise but perhaps the most affecting words quoted are from the German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, who, like Mozart's Jewish librettist da Ponte, proved a perpetual thorn in the Nazis' side. How to turn someone whose words are as central to Germany's culture as Shakespeare's are to ours into an enemy alien? That's one

trick the Nazis never quite managed to master and I can't resist closing with a Heine passage quoted from Haas's utterly captivating book. 'If we could rescue God from indignities which inhabit mankind here on earth,' wrote Heine, 'we would thus become redeemers of God himself – if we could restore dignity to a people deprived of joy...then...the whole of Europe, indeed, the whole world, will fall to us! It is this message of universal domination by Germany of which I so often dream when I wander among the oaks. This is my patriotism.' If only. **Rob Cowan**

Letters from a Life

The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten: Vol 6, 1966-76

Edited by Philip Reed and Mervyn Cooke

Boydell Press, HB, 880pp, £45

ISBN 978-1-84383-725-1



The sixth and final volume of Benjamin Britten's letters covers the last 10 years of his life.

Letters from a life, yes, but very much the composer's life as sourced from his letters. One appreciates a thorough completeness here. It is a wonderfully compiled tome. It has an extensive introduction that sets out how the book has been compiled, which reveals Philip Reed and Mervyn Cooke's meticulous and painstaking approach. Apart from the reproduction of the letters themselves – although the presentation is integral and makes a remarkable whole – are indexes relating to Britten's correspondents and to matters of discography and bibliography. There is also a chronology for each year, which neatly details the events for that time and the music that Britten composed therein. It begins in January 1966, a month when all the planned concerts and recording sessions were cancelled owing to Britten's ill health, something that will become more prominent over the remaining decade and a topic that Britten often refers to when apologising for lateness of reply.

But what makes the book so successful, aside, of course, from Britten's writing to



Britten in 1971: at Snape Maltings rehearsing Mozart's G minor Piano Quartet and, right, in Donald Mitchell's Sussex garden



a whole host of friends and collaborators, is the inclusion of copious footnotes, which go into fastidious detail to illuminate each letter: something about the recipient, the background of each letter (if Britten is responding) and the whys, wherefores and consequences relating to any one piece of correspondence. The result is a comprehensive and fascinating insight into the composer's final decade; absorbing and revealing.

Some of the letters have been amended for spelling mistakes and punctuation, which seems reasonable; after all, Britten was writing there and then to people that he (mostly) knew – the letters were often stepping stones to greater things or advice to fellow composers (Michael Berkeley, Jonathan Harvey, Nicholas Maw and John McCabe, for example) and, of course, the composer would not have expected his letters to be exposed to worldwide circulation. Corrections have been subtly made, with no harm to the flavour of each letter and retaining Britten's individuality in each one. Other correspondents include Janet Baker, Shostakovich, Rostropovich, Richter, André Previn, Arthur Bliss, Reginald Goodall, Norman Del Mar, Paul Sacher, Charlie Chaplin and numerous other

luminaries. William Walton is corresponded with at the time of the devastating fire that destroyed the Maltings, the concert-hall hub of the Aldeburgh Festival. Walton contributed £100 to its rebuilding, and typical of the authors' unstinting annotation is the reminder that the sum is equivalent to considerably more in today's money.

Also included are images of numerous pieces of memorabilia, such as invoices for holidays, the daily papers and conducting batons. There are also letters to Peter Pears, reporting great affection ('My dearest Honey'), sent by Britten to his tenor partner when he was away on tour. Quite often the two are together when travelling and working, and it is Britten who writes and includes Pears's best wishes as appropriate. Much is covered here: the planning of a new piece, the organising of recording sessions, and reports from performances abroad. There are also photographs and some letters are reproduced as facsimiles.

There is virtually nothing to criticise; maybe it would have been an idea to clarify that Oliver Knussen's two symphonies are the Second and the Third and that No 1 was withdrawn by the composer. The final letter to be included is from Pears, a poignant

report that Britten is 'slowly fading'. Overall this is a superbly produced and engrossing publication. A final thought, however: this book is compiled from documents from a time when letter-writing was the main form of communication. There was the telephone, of course, but such conversations were lost to the ether immediately. So much of this book is possible because Britten took pen to paper and these communications were kept. In today's fast world of email and text (and the invitation not to print them in order to think of the environment), although there are no doubt many documents of value and interest passing over the World Wide Web, are they being archived in a way that will assemble the books of the future? Or are we witnessing the demise both of the book and of the ability to look back so as to be able to fashion publications as superb as this one on Britten? **Colin Anderson**

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of reissues and archive recordings

First-class Furtwängler in Vienna

A comprehensive 18-disc overview of the inimitable conductor at the height of his powers

Orfeo's handsome new 18-disc collection of **Wilhelm Furtwängler's** Vienna Philharmonic concerts, recorded 1944-54 (not to be confused with their previously issued set of Furtwängler's Salzburg Festival concerts, recorded 1949-54, C409 048L) is interesting on a number of counts but principally for the two versions included of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*: the first (Part 1 only) from April 9, 1952, with Julius Patzak as the Evangelist and Otto Wiener as Jesus; the second (the complete work) from April 15, 1954, with a wonderfully mellifluous Anton Dermota as the Evangelist and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as Jesus. Irmgard Seefried is the soprano on the first recording, with Elisabeth Grümmer on the second.

The 1954 recording was substantially represented on an EMI Références release (10/95), though shorn of 10 minutes of music

'An incomparable conspectus of the conductor's inspired and combustible style'

and sounding quite different to the Orfeo edition. EMI tells us that the performances were given between April 14-17, which suggests that between the two sets, what we are in all probability hearing are some alternative performances of selected chorales and arias, or parts of arias. Certainly Orfeo offers us a far more natural recorded balance. Both the 1952 and 1954 performances have an operatic grandeur about them, an elevated spirit and depth of feeling, that recalls the world inhabited by Willem Mengelberg in

his legendary Concertgebouw performances from the late 1930s, though Furtwängler for the most part avoids the massive *rallentandos* that Mengelberg, for all his expressive magnificence, sometimes indulges to excess.

The one item in this set not involving the Vienna Philharmonic is a moving, albeit incomplete, recording of a performance of Brahms's *German Requiem* given by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and the Chorus of the Vienna Singakademie on January 25, 1951, with Seefried and Fischer-Dieskau as soloists, a disc filled with a (Philharmonic) performance of Brahms's *Haydn* Variations from the following year. The rest of the set will already be familiar to many Furtwängler collectors, although Orfeo's sound quality marks a significant improvement over many editions that I have heard. Beethoven's symphonies are represented by one First (1952), two (very different) *Eroicas* (1944, 1952) and three (not so different) Ninths (1951-53), bringing Orfeo's count of live Furtwängler *Chorals* up to at least five! As with the *Eroicas*, the two Bruckner Eighths (1944, 1954) offer varying degrees of tension and elasticity, though both are wonderful and find Furtwängler in his element, in contrast to his accompaniments to two Mozart piano concertos (K365 and 482), which sound more dutifully sympathetic than especially involving. A wartime 'big' Mozart Symphony No 40 harbours more prominent string *portamentos* than the justly celebrated post-war EMI recording which, as well as enshrining a more intense performance, adds the important first-movement exposition repeat.

Other highlights include Brahms's First and Second Symphonies (1952 and 1945

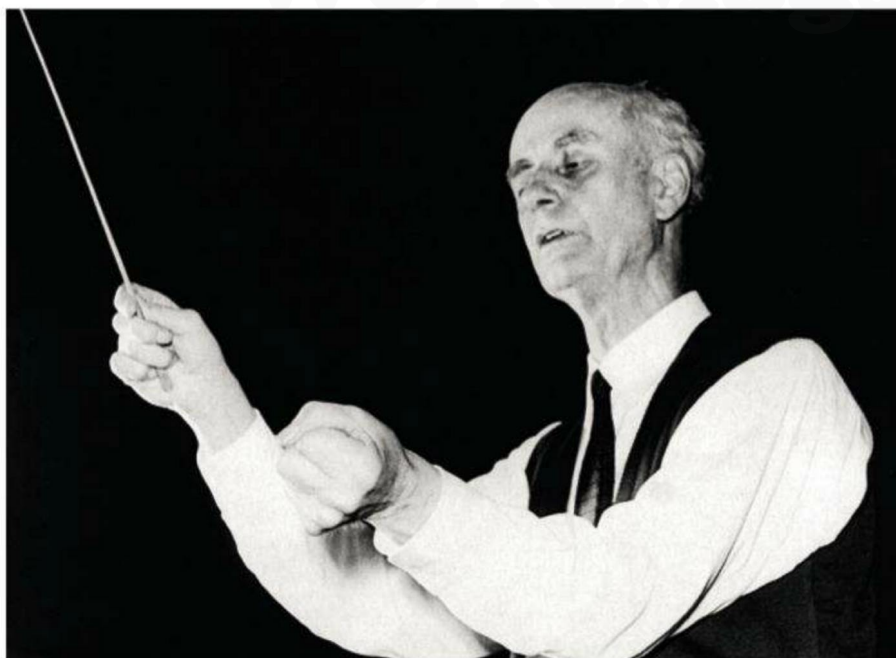
respectively), his Double Concerto (a deeply moving performance with violinist Willi Boskovsky and cellist Emanuel Brabec), a thrilling Franck Symphony in D minor (1945), Furtwängler's own Second Symphony (a late, loving look back at a bygone age and still to receive its critical due) and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with baritone Alfred Poell. Of the shorter works included, Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No 3 from 1944 is exceptional for its drama and orchestral brilliance, especially in the closing moments.

Comparing this collection with Orfeo's Salzburg set is difficult. Between the two, only three works are duplicated, namely Beethoven's *Eroica* and Ninth symphonies and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (each represented just once in Salzburg). Bearing in mind that the earlier collection includes such unmissable Furtwängler interpretations as Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* Nos 3 and 5, Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, Schubert's *Great C major*, Bruckner's Fifth, Brahms's Fourth, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* Overture and Strauss's *Don Juan*, I'd advise investing in both. Taken together they represent an incomparable conspectus of the conductor's inspired and combustible style in largely non-operatic repertoire, most of it very well recorded. There's nothing remotely like it to be heard in today's concert halls, that's for sure.

THE RECORDING



**'Wilhelm Furtwängler:
Vienna Concerts 1944-54'**
Orfeo d'Or © ® C834 118Y



Wilhelm Furtwängler: his relationship with the VPO is documented in Orfeo's new box-set

Koussevitzky at sea

While CDs of Furtwängler's performances appear with some regularity, concert recordings featuring the great Russian-American conductor **Serge Koussevitzky** are much harder to come by. West Hill Radio Archives' latest offering is something of a revelation: two complete concerts with the New York Philharmonic dating from 1942, including one work – Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony – that he never recorded commercially. The performance is compelling, the first movement especially, but it isn't the highlight of the set. For that you need to turn to Debussy's *La mer*, a work that Koussevitzky famously set down with his own Boston Symphony for Victor and that has already appeared on CD more than once. But this New York performance is on a different plane. The first movement's sea-swell climaxes with astonishing power; the play of the waves teases and cajoles with maximum flexibility; and as for the 'Dialogue of the wind and the sea', nothing prepared me for the spectral growls among the bass strings at the start or the rocketing inflections as the movement progresses. I'd recently been listening to 'unofficial' transfers of all Toscanini's NBC *La mers* but none of them compared with this.

Ravel's *Daphnis* Second Suite is almost as good, the side drummer going for broke in the 'Danse générale', and there's a lovably wilful account of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, replete with unexpected gear-changes (quite unlike *La mer*'s natural transitions), not dissimilar to Koussevitzky's commercial Boston recording but more emotive and passionately

played. The transfers are generally excellent. A major release.

THE RECORDING



Debussy. Ravel. Tchaikovsky, etc
 NYPO / Koussevitzky
 West Hill Radio Archives
 M 2 WHRA6049

Iconic Silvestri

Koussevitzky's interpretative peculiarities in Tchaikovsky's Fifth are matched by **Constantin Silvestri's** in the Fourth (witness the opening fanfares) as included as part of a 15-disc set of Silvestri's complete EMI recordings. Some while ago Disky Communications Europe licensed a fair number of these recordings for their own 10-disc collection (DB707432, 11/02). EMI has added to those the last three Tchaikovsky symphonies and *Mamfred*, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, two Paris Conservatoire versions of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony (one in stereo, the other in mono), Paris recordings of *Danse macabre* and Ravel's *Boléro*.

Aside from the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra we hear from the Philharmonia, the Vienna Philharmonic and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, with whom Silvestri forged a deep artistic understanding which resulted in such indelible recorded classics as Elgar's *In the South* and Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasia*. Anywhere you choose to sample you will sense painstaking preparation and a fine ear for even the tiniest instrumental detail as well as that all-too-rare ability to stoke up the temperature in a way that most conductors

can only manage in a live context. Among the most remarkable inclusions are the various shorter works, Borodin's *Prince Igor* Overture, for example, lithe and well drilled but crammed with personality, or the fiery Bournemouth recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*.

As to the more substantial works common to both the Disky and EMI sets, Dvořák's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, Franck's D minor Symphony, Stravinsky's *Song of the Nightingale* (especially good) and Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony prove particularly gripping. Sound quality is excellent and while not every performance will suit every mood (Silvestri was far too much of an individualist for that), there's hardly a single item that isn't worth returning to.

THE RECORDING



**'Constantin Silvestri:
 The Complete EMI Recordings'**
 EMI Icon S 15 723347-2

Mengelberg in NY

I recall years ago, when interviewing Christopher Hogwood, being surprised at how this period-instrument pioneer enthused over the recordings of the great Dutch maestro **Willem Mengelberg**, 'not only because he exerted a lot of heavy personality on what he played,' as Hogwood put it, 'but because his players provided virtually the last example of an orchestra performing in the manner of a chamber group'. By 'his orchestra', Hogwood was referring to the Amsterdam Concertgebouw but Pristine Classical's new reissue of key Mengelberg recordings with his 'other' orchestra, the New York Philharmonic Symphony, reveals a relationship that was equally symbiotic.

Of special interest is Handel's *Alcina* Suite, which given the year, 1929, was something of a trailblazer in that it used what sounds like a harpsichord continuo. JC Bach's Sinfonia, Op 18 No 2, is given the sort of cleanly tailored performance that Hogwood himself might justifiably be proud of. Other highlights include an incisive March from Meyerbeer's *Le prophète*, a delicately spun account of *Le rouet d'Omphale* by Saint-Saëns and one of the few recordings of 'Forest Murmurs' (Wagner's *Siegfried*) that makes enough musical sense to justify playing it out of context. Note too how Mengelberg achieves crystal-clear articulation in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* Overture, a miracle of clarity and conciseness. Mark Obert-Thorn's transfers are all one could wish for.

THE RECORDING



'Mengelberg in New York'
 Pristine Audio
 S PASC378

THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE TO...

The suite revival

Originally dating back to the 14th century, the suite was taken up by Tchaikovsky in the 1870s. Of the many composers who followed, **Adrian Edwards** picks the best works and recordings



A caricature of Holst playing the trombone; he took up the instrument as a cure for asthma, but it later provided inspiration for his masterful brass band compositions

The suite originated in the late 14th century through the popularity of dances. Later, composers and editors of keyboard music linked dances together in larger collections such as the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book and *Partbenia*, which include pavans and galliards by Byrd, Gibbons and Bull.

The title 'suite' was formalised in keyboard works by Johann Froberger (1616-67) before reaching its zenith in Bach's orchestral and instrumental suites and Handel's celebratory *Water Music* and *Fireworks Music*. The genre then declined in favour of sonata form in the symphony, sonata and string quartet. In the

1870s, Tchaikovsky revived the suite, stating that he wanted a break from symphonic music to compose one! He kept the expansive opening movement favoured by Bach and Handel, except in Suite No 4, *Mozartiana*; here, he invoked the spirit of Mozart, whom he admired despite him having effectively seen off the genre in the late 18th century.

Many of Tchaikovsky's movements are dances with titles in French. His work inspired composers of diverse nationalities to write suites in which traditional dance movements are inspired by native folk music. The genre was a haven for the likes of Bartók, Berg and

Britten, who had no numbered symphonies to their name; and it held a particular attraction for British composers such as Holst, whose many suites of course include *The Planets*.

The light-music tradition that flourished in England from the early 20th century may well have played a part in favouring the suite's popularity. On the Continent, the genre embraced Berg's autobiographical *Lyric Suite* for string quartet, and Bartók's *Out of Doors*, whose form heralded the arch-like structure of his String Quartets Nos 4 and 5.

My top 10 features recordings with a strong identification between artist and work. **G**



10 Britten:
A Time There Was
City of Birmingham Symphony
Orchestra / Simon Rattle
EMI Classics © ② 573983-2

This is a vivid recording of Britten's *Suite on English Folk Tunes*, played with great insight by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle. Rattle brings out as well as any the diverse character of each movement – whether playful, as in 'Hankin Booby'; or elegiac, as in 'Lord Melbourne', where the cor anglais melody heralds closure to Britten's final orchestral work.



9 Taneyev:
Suite de concert
David Oistrakh *vn*
Philharmonia Orchestra /
Nikolai Malko

EMI Classics © 361570-2
Taneyev evokes Baroque and Classical dance forms, as well as doffing his hat to Tchaikovsky's Suite No 3 with a Theme and Variations movement. Oistrakh is incomparable – both virtuoso and innately musical. He produces the sweetest sound imaginable in the fairy-tale movement and a powerfully warm tone even in the most hair-raising passages. Recorded in stereo, he is ably supported by conductor and orchestra.



8 Fauré: Dolly
Kathryn Stott,
Martin Roscoe *pfs*
Hyperion © ④
CDA66911/4 (5/95)

Dolly was originally composed by Fauré for his mistress's daughter Hélène Bardac, but the opening 'Berceuse' was later purged of any such association when it played out each episode of *Listen With Mother*, the programme for mothers and children at home that was broadcast daily on BBC radio from 1952. Kathryn Stott and Martin Roscoe live and breathe as one in this spontaneous and affectionate performance.



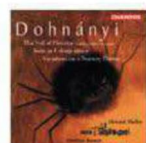
7 Milhaud:
Suite provençale
Toulouse Capitole Orchestra /
Michel Plasson
DG © 435 4372GH (7/92)

The eight short movements of this irresistible suite pack in an extraordinary array of colour and mood, switching from the raucous and the pastoral to the playful and the quirky. There's no finer exponent of Milhaud's sometimes brazen style than French conductor Michel Plasson, who knows this terrain inside out and draws from his Toulouse Capitole Orchestra playing of great warmth and elegance.



6 Tippett:
*Suite for the Birthday
of Prince Charles*
London Symphony Orchestra /
Colin Davis

Decca Eloquence © 476 7960 (10/76R)
Tippett tackles this commission with such relish that one wonders if he was ever considered for the post of Master of the Queen's Music. His very appealing work based on folksong runs the gamut from the rumbustious to the tender, and each movement is beautifully drawn in Colin Davis's affectionate, light-on-its-feet performance with the LSO.



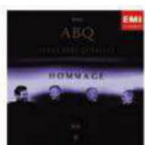
**5 Dobnányi: Suite in
F sharp minor, Op 19**
BBC Phil / Matthias Bamert
Chandos © CHAN9733 (9/99)

Dobnányi's suite is an inventive, tuneful work that's resourcefully scored, opening with a sober theme from which the composer spins an intoxicating set of variations. Sargent had a soft spot for this engaging work; he recorded it twice, the second time, in 1961, securing a winning performance from the RPO in stereo at Abbey Road (1/90 - nla). But this Chandos version is a fine alternative – in his review, Rob Cowan praised 'the serene string choirs' in the *Andante con variazioni*.



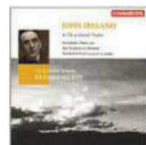
4 Bartók:
Out of Doors
Zoltán Kocsis *pf*
Decca © ⑧ 478 2364R (7/97)

In form and content, this suite encapsulates a number of Bartók's composing traits, with 'The Night's Music' the most original of the five movements. Kocsis follows Bartók's own dictum that performances must be 'beautiful but true' with playing that captures every nuance – whether it be the percussive writing in 'With Drums and Pipes', the boatman's song in the 'Barcarolla' with its modal inflections from Magyar folk music, or the nocturnal birdsong and creepy crawlies in 'The Night's Music'.



3 Berg:
Lyric Suite
Alban Berg Quartet
EMI © ⑤ 397629-2 (5/96R)

This compelling performance is attuned to every nuance and mood – jovial, amorous, mysterious (then ecstatic), passionate, delirious and desolate, all identified in the titles of the six movements – in Alban Berg's highly strung love song that not so long ago was revealed to be a valentine to a married woman with whom he'd fallen in love. The juxtaposition of 12-note techniques with unbridled romanticism reveals an unspoken and often unsettling scenario.



**2 Ireland: A Downland
Suite, arr Ireland and
Geoffrey Bush**
City of London Sinfonia /
Richard Hickox

Chandos © CHAN9376 (11/95)
Ireland's love of the Sussex Downs is evident in the strong emotional pull of this music, which draws the listener into the landscape. The Elegy's long melodic line, which, as the composer noted, works much better on strings than with the original brass scoring, is touching in its quiet contemplation of nature, while the Rondo's bracing tune raises the spirits skyward. Hickox gives a wonderfully expressive reading.

1 Holst: Suite No 1 in E flat, Op 28a. Suite No 2 in F, Op 28b

Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble / Frederick Fennell
Mercury Living Presence © (55 discs) 478 509-2



Holst loved the sound of the military band and was the pioneer of concert music for it. In 1909 he wrote his First Suite, taking the genre way beyond its former links to ceremonial occasions and the seaside pier. Drawing on his experience as a trombonist, he created a new platform for this instrumental combination for which he displayed a mastery of polyphonic writing and clarity of line. His daughter Imogen admired this famous Mercury recording (1954/5), made with one carefully positioned single microphone. The crisp playing, instrumental solos and essential contribution of the percussion have never been matched in performance or caught so vividly elsewhere.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear the first movement of Holst's Suite No 2 played by the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble

ARE YOU A SPECIALIST?

Visit gramophone.co.uk/forum to suggest your top suite recordings as well as discs of **two-piano works** performed by such artists as Sviatoslav Richter and Benjamin Britten (right), the subject of next month's specialist, David Threshier.





The troubadour Manrico's costume for an 1883 La Scala, Milan, production of Il trovatore - designed by Alfredo Edel

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

The troubled troubadour

The plot of Verdi's **Il trovatore** has been ridiculed and the opera was dismissed by George Bernard Shaw as 'void of intellectual interest' – yet there are many recordings that transcend the criticism, writes **Mike Ashman**

Verdi spoke initially of opening *Il trovatore* with Manrico's 'Deserto sulla terra' serenade instead of any kind of overture, thus looking forward by almost half a century to the *verismo* of *Cavalleria rusticana*; and of having 'no cavatinas, duets, trios, choruses, finales etc', with the whole work 'consisting of a single number' – similar to Wagner's theories in *Opera and Drama* and his practice in *Tristan und Isolde*. But eventually he chose to return to work with the vastly experienced but mortally ill Salvatore Cammarano – precisely because he was the senior statesman of contemporary-establishment Italian librettists. Verdi accepted Cammarano's retooling of Antonio García Gutiérrez's formally radical play into a series of set pieces assimilable into existing Italian operatic forms, bridling only when the librettist attempted to put the brakes on the Spanish dramatist's lightning pacing and violent body count. 'But there's a lot of death in life, isn't there?', was Verdi's defence.

Il trovatore's sudden, non-narrative lurching between scenes in time and place never much upset European and American commentators. But such filmic 'jump-cutting' – a modernising step familiar to spoken theatre but quite new in recent opera (if not in the age of Monteverdi) – went too far for British opera commentators. A Victorian synopsis ridiculed the plot's

narrative logic, beginning, 'This is the story / Of Il Trovatore'. There were rumours of a translation of Manrico's 'Di quella pira' as 'Mother is roasting / Down in the courtyard'. It was inevitable that *Il trovatore* became the opera sabotaged in performance in the Marx Brothers' *A Night at the Opera*: the Sinfonia is jazzed up, the tragic Act 4 *Miserere* is sung with broad smiles and a battleship appears on stage.

By 2009 *Il trovatore*'s continuing popularity had run (according to one discography website) to no less than 196 'complete' recordings, including many off-the-air performances. The present survey will be somewhat more selective. And remember that the term 'complete' is relative: don't expect as a matter of course to find the rather fine Act 3 ballet, everything in the right key (especially 'Di quella pira'), or even Leonora's Act 4 cabaletta 'Tu vedrai che amore', especially in pre-1980 recordings.

EARLY ITALIAN JOBS

We begin in electric earnest in 1930 in Italy, where La Scala (Milan) house conductors **Lorenzo Molajoli** and **Carlo Sabajno** (originally on Columbia and HMV shellac) led sparky, idiomatic performances with all-Italian casts. In addition to the fluency of performers working in their native tongue, both sets have that attractive lack of self-aware sophistication

reminiscent of premiere recordings. Toscanini favourite Aureliano Pertile (for Sabajno) doesn't steel himself to declaim 'Di quella pira' as loudly as possible or to hang on to its unwritten final C for as long as possible. He simply sings, to an infectious rhythm, a heroic song of leadership about rescuing someone dear to him. His rival on the other set, Francesco Merli, also sounds like a natural leader. For Sabajno again, Apollo Granforte's Count di Luna is in convincingly young-sounding, ardent voice, free of the unattractive sulkiness that has become a default setting for many of his successors. If a mythical flood swept aside all other recordings of this opera, these two performances – set down at the roughly 80-year time distance from us now as they themselves were from the opera's premiere – would serve Verdi and Cammarano's work well.

Jussi Björling was a stylish Manrico, a troubled troubadour (if you'll excuse the phrase) in love rather than a medieval rock singer with lungs. He can be heard live in London, New York and Stockholm between 1939 and 1960, but here we'll investigate his only studio recording. Its conducting (by **Renato Cellini**) is pilloried in every guide I know for being bland and undramatic; Toscanini (quoted in Cesare Civetta's recent monograph) thought it 'excellent. The colours

of the orchestra are so intuitive...the transitions of the tempos...wonderful.' In Cellini's naturalness and restraint there is certainly a link with the work of the 1930s Milan maestros, the reverse of the punchily dramatic big theatre sound increasingly sought in studio recordings from the 1970s on. Cellini, as in his other Björling records, goes with his tenor (and the composer) in stressing the personal, private side of the character. Zinka Milanov sounds a little old for Leonora, obsessed with being a court lady rather than the lover of outlaws whose youth and beauty are explicitly praised in Ferrando's opening story-telling scene. But, as in her *Aida*, *Cavalleria* and last act of *Rigoletto* (for Toscanini), she is creditably alive enough to the drama and words to compel attention. Leonard Warren, recorded drily, sounds rushed, nervous and score-bound. Fedora Barbieri is an honest, human Azucena who – suitably in tandem with Björling – explores more of the mother than the vengeful witch.

MAD ABOUT THE TROUBADOUR

Other *Il trovatore* obsessives include **Herbert von Karajan** and Maria Callas, who joined forces on Columbia's 1956 La Scala recording – one of Walter Legge's few real successes in Italian repertoire. Here the soprano was even able to prevent Legge's excessive use of the producer's scissors and retain her Act 4 cabaletta. Well partnered by Barbieri's Azucena and Karajan's still comparatively Classical-style accompaniments (the influence, perhaps, of the back-of-the-orchestra- and percussion-hating Legge?), Callas makes a lot of other Leonoras sound like they're missing a great character role. The men are less on the case – Rolando Panerai dry and anonymous, and Giuseppe di Stefano not in great vocal shape. I'm hoping someone like Pristine's Andrew Rose will remaster the never great sound. EMI for some reason (Legge again?) stayed mono while the competition were all working with two channels. Other Callas performances (Mexico, Naples and, best, La Scala live) have better

men and worse recording, but she was always a fascinating Leonora, living out the character's path from riches to rags in sound.

All four performances mentioned so far have in common a serious, relatively chamber-scaled approach to the score. That's one sure route to success. To this list we might add Oehms's 2009 live recording from Friedrich Schiller's sometime haunt Schloss Ludwigsburg, whose Festival Orchestra play for **Michael Hofstetter** on original instruments. Try this lighter-voiced Act 3 from the sequence around the hero and heroine's near-wedding in the guerilla camp. Herbert Lippert – Hofstetter's Bellini-like Manrico – has exactly the right timbre for 'Ah sì, ben mio' and is still able not to short-change the real noise in 'Di quella pira' (even if the wind is suddenly not kind to Southwest German Radio's open-air recording). Then, as Act 4 (where two of the four main soloists sacrifice themselves) becomes almost a Requiem, we hear the dramatic and sonic advantages of Simone Kermes's agile Leonora.

Now compare **Karajan's** boisterous 1977 Berlin EMI remake. It's obvious that he's dreaming of the same effect from the tenor, because he tries to get the beefy-voiced Franco Bonisolli to sound like a Lippert ('if Karajan wanted "Ah sì, ben mio" crooned, he could have cast Tony Bennett, whose falsetto style is superior to Bonisolli's', stated a pointed review of the original release). Elsewhere, though, Karajan – amid the sonic experiments that he was making with his move to the EMI recording team of Michel Glotz and Wolfgang Güllich – was looking to recreate the 'big' layered sound that he was getting in the palatial opera houses of Salzburg and Vienna. Leontyne Price, past her steadiest, is recalled to the part she virtually owned at the start of the 1960s (you could try her live on DG – with Karajan – and Sony; for her RCA studio recording, see page 99). Obratzsova, then the latest overnight Eastern bloc sensation, is a loud Azucena – all witch, no mother; Bonisolli, too, provides the requisite decibels; Piero Cappuccilli (I suspect

didn't get to record his arias at his favourite time of day. Verdict? To quote the late Margaret Thatcher: 'No, no, no.'

DIFFERENT STROKES

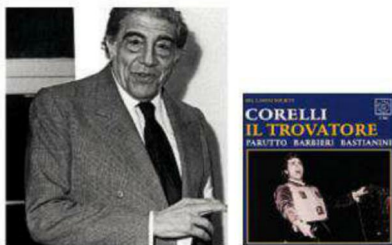
Another successful way of capturing the brio of *Il trovatore* on record has been the well-run-in repertoire performance caught live. For the Met Opera on tour in Atlanta in 1960 the experienced (and, crucially, enthusiastic) **Fausto Cleva** has at least three-quarters of a tasteful quartet led by the underrated Lucine Amara. Her vocal timbre is light enough to keep her Act 1 and Act 4 scenes more in the mode of Bellini or Donizetti than *Aida*. Carlo Bergonzi's singing is an object lesson in *squillo* without the crudity (try his first serenade; or Act 3 where the sustained notes thrill the gallery without harming the composer). Jean Madeira is a reliable Azucena who colours the voice according to the words she's actually singing (like Yvonne Naef on the Ludwigsburg performance, or Brigitte Fassbaender for the 1983/84 Giulini; but this quality is not as frequently achieved as you might expect for this character who talks so much). Robert Merrill's 'Il balen' is edgy and disappointing. Avoid the set if you don't like intrusive applause (the soloists' first stage appearances are hailed), but this was a good evening in the theatre recorded by the radio – and a more exciting glimpse of Bergonzi's Manrico than the slightly later DG set which **Tullio Serafin** leads with well-meant but tension-killing restraint.

On the 1961 live Rome set conducted by **Oliviero de Fabritiis**, the Leonora, Mirella Parutto, had no flash international recording contract and may be a name familiar only to Italians and anoraks. She's a gem, a beautiful, cleanly produced voice with a real sense of scale, big and small (perhaps Enrico Caruso's remark about a successful performance of *Il trovatore* simply needing the four greatest singers in the world should read: 'All you need is the greatest Leonora in the world'). De Fabritiis has three other advantages:



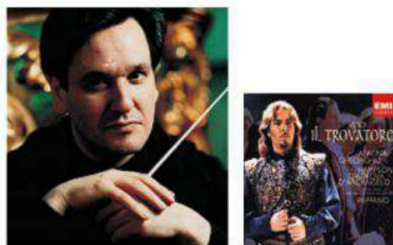
BEST HISTORIC

Herbert von Karajan • EMI Ⓟ ② 640773-2
Typical of Karajan's chamber-detailed work at La Scala. And Callas, already a star in the role in Mexico and all over Italy, is an intricate and subtle Leonora.



BEST LIVE

Oliviero de Fabritiis
Bel Canto Society Ⓢ ② BCS5012
Live in Rome, where a good time was had by all, and less well-known soprano Mirella Parutto is a star alongside a thrilling Corelli.



BEST MODERN

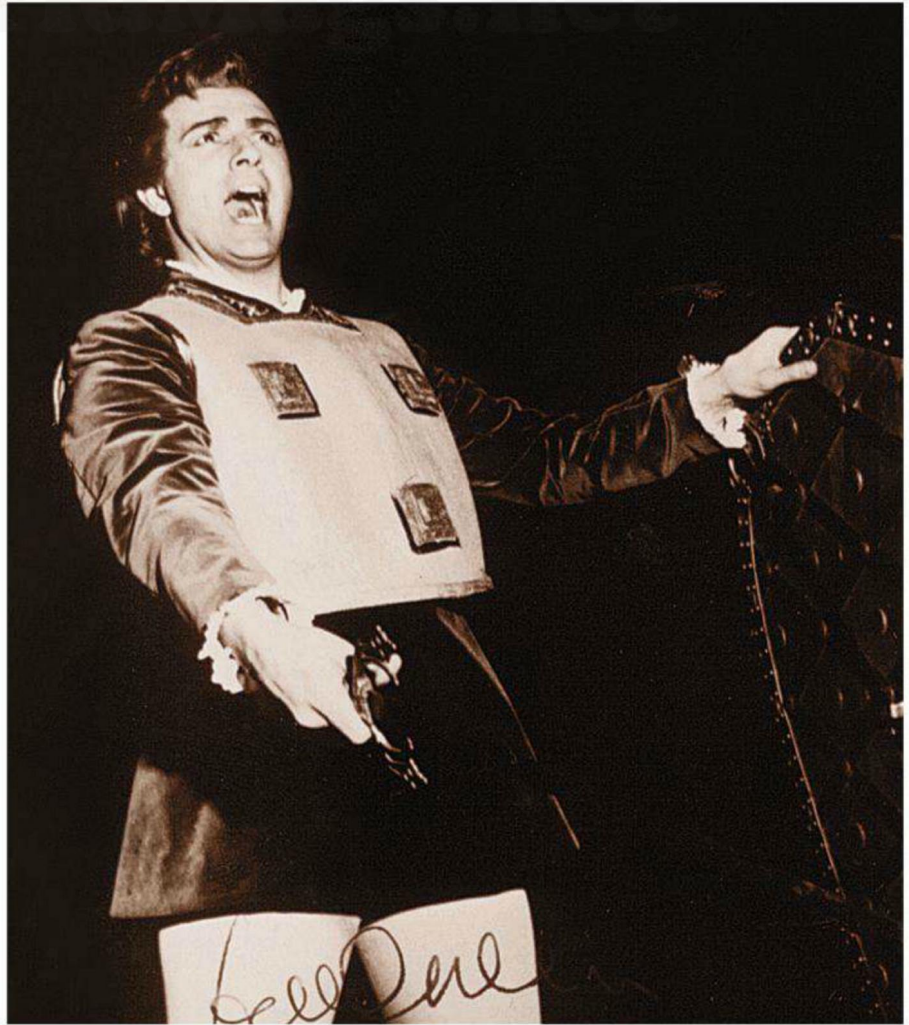
Antonio Pappano • EMI Ⓢ ② 557360-2
The Royal Opera House's then new music director in swaggering form with a choice young cast including the then married Alagna and Gheorghiu. Good sound, good brio.

Franco Corelli and Barbieri in one of their best recorded performances; and a baritone (Ettore Bastianini) who agrees with his conductor about the (thankfully not too many) places in which they're going to take time or slow up. Corelli is a dream Manrico – he has the *squillo*, he can have the subtlety, the voice sounds big but still young, and he's sexy and noble without getting overneurotic in the 'bad news' messenger-promoted crises that plague the character in Acts 2 and 3. A famous holder of high notes in *Tosca* (try his 'Vittorias' from Livorno, 1959 – every night is a bullfight!), Corelli, like Bergonzi, shows here how to play to the gallery without damaging taste buds.

THE DARKER SIDE

If you want *Il trovatore* dark and serious, there's **Carlo Maria Giulini**. An 'early' performance (1964 from Covent Garden, one of the last in its defunct series of 'in-house' recordings) provides a way station towards the more controversial 1983/84 DG studio version – the latter made with the Rome orchestra for which Giulini was once a back-desk viola player. The 1960s performance is predictably quicker – by nearly two minutes in the linchpin Azucena–Manrico Act 2 duet where mother doesn't quite tell the truth. Yet the younger Giulini clearly relished the overtones shared with *La traviata*; for example, the sinuous chromatic twists underneath Azucena's part of the duet, representing her unhappy life and revengeful plotting. Bruno Prevedi is passionately effective here, if a touch anonymous compared with bigger-name rivals, and Giulietta Simionato (anything but safely predictable in this role – typical Giulini casting) a stressed 'real' mother rather than a pantomime wicked witch.

Giulini's casting in 1964 included two British Verdians – Gwyneth Jones (Leonora) and Peter Glossop (di Luna) – not otherwise well captured in this repertoire. In 1983 he chose another British Leonora, Rosalind Plowright, who uses both the distinctively darker and lighter colours in her voice to fullest effect, and a German Azucena, the intelligent and probing Fassbaender. The latter sometimes struggles with both the tessitura and style of the role, not to mention her conductor's pacing, but in tandem with Plácido Domingo (also not obvious casting in this often top-C-orientated role) in that Act 2 duet, she and maestro Giulini strike sparks. In fact, Verdi did once intend Azucena for the opera's central, titular role. Fassbaender creates a tragic portrait of Azucena's grief, backed up by the space Giulini allows her, the colours and rhythmic stresses he gets from his Roman players and Domingo's willingness to be *secundus inter pares* rather than nervous vocal rival. A scene whose relentless motoric rhythm can remind one of Arthur Sullivan's affectionate parodies acquires a dark weight akin to the mood of Giulini's epochal



'A dream Manrico': Franco Corelli, 'playing to the gallery without damaging taste buds'

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

DATE / ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1930 Scacciati [†] , Merli [†] , Molinari [†] ; La Scala, Milan / Molajoli	Naxos Ⓢ ② 8 110162/3 (2/31 [†] , 3/02)
1930 Carena [†] , Pertile [†] , Granforte [†] ; La Scala, Milan / Sabajno	Grammofono 2000 Ⓜ ② AB78737/8 (3/31 [†]); Romophone Ⓢ ② 890032 (7/98 [†])
1952 Milanov [†] , Björling [†] , Warren [†] ; RCA Victor Orch / Cellini	Naxos Ⓢ ② 8 110240/41 (3/54 [†] , 8/88 [†])
1956 Callas [†] , Di Stefano [†] , Panerai [†] ; La Scala, Milan / Karajan	EMI Ⓢ ② 640773-2, Ⓢ ② 377365-2 (11/57 [†] , 1/74 [†] , 12/87 [†])
1960 Amara [†] , Bergonzi [†] , Merrill [†] ; NY Met Op / Clewa	Walhall Ⓢ ② WLCDO321
1961 Parutto [†] , Corelli [†] , Bastianini [†] ; Rome Op / de Fabritiis	Bel Canto Society Ⓢ ② BCS5012 (9/01); Walhall Ⓢ ② WLCDO338
1962 Stella [†] , Bergonzi [†] , Bastianini [†] ; La Scala, Milan / Serafin	DG Ⓢ ② 477 5662GOH2 (12/63 [†] , 8/76 [†] , 1/96 [†])
1964 G Jones [†] , Prevedi [†] , Glossop [†] ; Royal Op, Covent Garden / Giulini	ROH Heritage Ⓜ ② ROHSO11 (1/09)
1964 Tucci [†] , Corelli [†] , Merrill [†] ; Rome Op / Schippers	EMI Ⓢ ② 763640-2 (5/65 [†] , 11/99 [†] – nla)
1969 L Price [†] , Domingo [†] , Milnes [†] ; New Philh Orch / Mehta	RCA Ⓜ ② 74321 39504-2 (7/70 [†] , 8/88 [†])
1976 Sutherland [†] , Pavarotti [†] , Wixell [†] ; Nat PO / Bonyng	Decca Ⓢ ② 460 7352DF2, Ⓜ ② 475 8281DM3 (10/77 [†] , 3/78 [†])
1977 L Price [†] , Bonisoli [†] , Cappuccilli [†] ; BPO / Karajan	EMI Ⓢ ② 769311-2 (4/78 [†] , 11/78 [†] , 3/87 [†] , 4/88 – nla)
1983 Sutherland [†] , Collins [†] , Summers [†] ; Australian Op / Bonyng	ArtHaus Ⓢ ② DVD 100 276 (A/02)
1983/84 Plowright [†] , Domingo [†] , Zancanaro [†] ; Santa Cecilia Orch / Giulini	DG Ⓢ ② 477 5915GOR2 (11/84 [†] , 2/85 [†])
2001 Frittoli [†] , Licitra [†] , Nucci [†] ; La Scala, Milan / Muti	Sony Ⓢ ② 88697 98603-2 (5/02 [†])
2001/02 Gheorghiu [†] , Alagna [†] , Hampson [†] ; LSO / Pappano	EMI Ⓢ ② 557360-2 (A/02)
2002 Villarroel [†] , Cura [†] , Hvorostovsky [†] ; Royal Op, Covent Garden / Rizzi	Opus Arte Ⓢ ② DVD OA0848 [†] , OA0849 [†] (2/03); Ⓢ ② OABD7006D
2009 Kernes [†] , Lippert [†] , Turk [†] ; Ludwigsburg Fest Orch / Hofstetter	Oehms Ⓢ ② OC951
2010 Radvanovsky [†] , M Álvarez [†] , Hvorostovsky [†] ; NY Met Op / Armiliato	DG Ⓢ ② DVD 073 4783GH; Ⓢ ② 073 4797GH

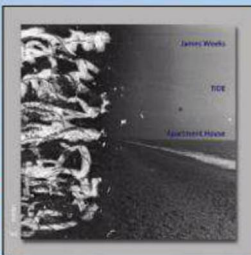
Key: [†]Leonora [†]Manrico [†]Count di Luna

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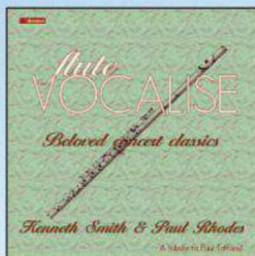
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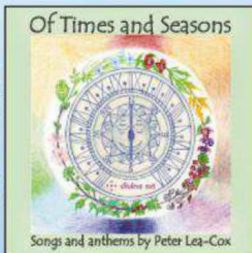
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Walter Legge (far left) with some of the cast of the 1956 Karajan recording: Callas, Panerai, Barbieri and Zaccaria

Chicago Brahms Four recording. The duet has become a dialogue as unartificial and dramatic as any that Wagner was writing at the time.

'Straighter', faster, centrist performances are to be found on two sets: one from 1964 under the young, operatically ubiquitous American **Thomas Schippers**, and the other from 1969 under **Zubin Mehta**. Schippers has a good mother and 'son' in Simionato and Corelli, gets as much out of the Rome players and chorus as anyone since Georg Solti's *Aida*, and is entertainingly at ease with Verdi's old-fashioned 'shushing' chorus in the cloisters. If neither he nor Mehta delivers for the microphones a dramatic overview of the piece as strong as Giulini's or Karajan's, both are evidently effective organisers of studio time. Mehta's RCA set (recorded in London) has a mature but still lustrous-sounding Price (with gorgeous Act 4 aria and ensuing cabaletta in place) and a hot, young Domingo leading a reliable Sherill Milnes and efficient Barbieri. This could still be the 'library' *Trovatore*.

DVDS AND THE 21ST CENTURY

Joan Sutherland chose not to be a Verdian, but her long experience of both *bel canto* and French repertoire equipped her – as it did **Richard Bonyng** – for leading a 1976 Decca set and a 1983 DVD from Sydney. The DVD has a production by Elijah Moshinsky cunningly worked around Sidney Nolan's designs and the varying acting capabilities of the soloists – including a young Jonathan Summers and the British tenor Kenneth Collins, a stalwart of Verdi and Puccini tours with Welsh National Opera. In the studio

we get some textbook singing from Sutherland alongside a diplomatically restrained Luciano Pavarotti, a neutral Ingvar Wixell and stylish support (accompaniment rather than driving interpretation) from Bonyng. The style and feel have much of the period rightness of scale of original-instrument recordings, and, with Sutherland, there's some vocal history here.

Moshinsky's Australian stage production is stronger than his Covent Garden staging of 2002 (Opus Arte, conductor **Carlo Rizzi**), though José Cura catches more of Manrico's 19th-century Romantic neurosis than many a rival. Of the remaining DVDs (to date a disappointing selection), the Met Opera's production conducted by **Marco Armiliato** provides (through Charles Edwards's revolving set) the best solution to keeping this show, with its frequent changes of scene, on the move in our age of weighty 21st-century scenery.

As the 21st century got going, **Antonio Pappano** carried on with the then husband-and-wife team featuring in his Puccini cycle, pacing *Il trovatore* as surely as he had *La bohème* or *La rondine*. Even without an opera house orchestra, this set has enough brio to wave aside objections that Angela Gheorgiu tries to sound like Callas and Roberto Alagna's top is not always secure. Pappano is especially successful at maintaining pace while accommodating everyone's notes. His team revel in the drive and enthusiasm of making a thrilling new *Trovatore*. If this *Trovatore* came early in Pappano's career, **Riccardo Muti**'s came late (and wasn't this opera, along with much Puccini, once on his personal list of 'untouchables'?). As you would expect, it's

a tight, well-rehearsed, unified, centrist reading from which you could recreate the score.

It's also most carefully cast: Violeta Urmana has much to say about Azucena, and Manrico is stylish in the hands of the late Salvatore Licita, who's been encouraged by Muti not to blow up the role into a big belt. There are none of the traditional cuts. Nothing is wrong, but it's all just short of the life and drive that informed Muti's first London-made Verdi sets.

George Bernard Shaw's experience of *Il trovatore* included participation in a pro-am production as repetiteur and stage manager. He praised the score's 'impetuous vigour' and its 'sweet and intense pathos that never loses its dignity'; yet under his pseudonym *Corno di Bassetto* he found it 'absolutely void of intellectual interest; the appeal is to the senses all through. If it allowed you to think for a moment it would crumble into absurdity like the garden of Klingsor.' Like most of his Gordian knot-cutting conclusions, Shaw's judgement reads well – but he misunderstands Verdi's purpose at this stage of his career. *Il trovatore* is the *Meistersinger* to *La traviata*'s *Tristan und Isolde* – a different work, less serious but important to both the composer and the art form. As Julian Budden summed up in his Verdi operas trilogy, *Il trovatore* is 'a late flowering of the Italian romantic tradition possible only to one who had seen beyond it'.

My desert island *Trovatore*, Giulini's 1983/84 recording, will be controversial for both inveterate canary fanciers and those who like their middle-period Verdian 'rum-ti-tum' taken at a relentlessly spanking pace (look to Pappano, Mehta and Muti for more of this attribute). Giulini's cast of acting singers are fully engaged in his vision of a serious mid-19th-century drama about families and love caught up in wartime. **G**



TOP CHOICE

Carlo Maria Giulini • DG **Ⓟ** 477 5915GOR2

Perhaps it would be advisable to begin by taking a sample of this one – a controversial choice. But this *Traviata*-like *Trovatore*, with Fassbaender in magnificent, dark Azucena scenes, takes the prize for great drama.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear excerpts from this month's featured recordings



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GRAMOPHONE DISC OF THE MONTH

Dvorak: Stabat Mater; Soloists/Collegium Vocale Gent/Herreweghe Phi LPH009 £12.99

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Beethoven: Triple Concerto/Archduke Trio; Storioli Trio/etc Challenge Classics CC72579	£15.99	Quilter: Songbook Vol 1; Mark Stone/Stephen Barlow Stone 50601927 80253	£12.99
Beethoven: String Qt 8/Shostakovich: String Qt 3; Valentin Berlinsky Qt Avie AV 2273	£12.99	Schnittke: Piano Quartet/Quintet/etc; Molinari Quartet Atma ACD 22669	£12.99
Handel/Hasse: "A Tribute to Faustina Bordoni"; Genaux/etc DHM 88691 944592	£12.99	York Bowen: Complete works for Violin & Piano; Hanslip/Driver Hyperion CDA 67991/2 (2 CDs)	£25.99
Holmboe: Concertos; Norrköping SO/Slobodeniuk Da Capo 6220599	£12.99	"I Viaggi di Faustina"; Roberta Invernizzi/I Turchini/Florio Glossa GCD 922606	£13.99
Francesco da Milano: "Il Divino"; Paul O'Dette Harmonia Mundi HMU 907557	£13.99	DVD - Britten: Peter Grimes; Graham-Hall/Malucco/Ticciati Opus Arte OA 1103D	£24.99
		(Also available on Blu-Ray, OABD7119D, £29.99)	

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OUR PICK OF THE MONTH'S NEW RELEASES

Bach: Organ Works; Quinney Coro COR 16112	£12.99	Handel: Chandos Anthems 5a, 6a & 8; Trinity College/OAE/Layton Hyperion CDA 67926	£12.99
Bach: Secular Cantatas Vol 3; Bach Collegium Japan/Suzuki BIS 2041 (SACD)	£12.99	Handel/Mozart: Timotheus oder die Gewalt der Musik; Harmoncourt Sony 88883 704812 (2 CDs)	£14.99
"Balkan Spirit"; Hesperion XXI/Savall Aliavox AVSA 9898 (SACD)	£12.99	Ireland: Songbook Vol 1; Mark Stone/Sholto Kynoch Stone 50601927 80260	£12.99
Beethoven: String Quartets Op 18 (3-5); Allegri Quartet Vivat 103	£11.99	Mahler: Symphony 8; Soloists/Royal Concertgebouw Orch/Jansons RCO 13003 (SACD + DVD)	£12.99
"Britten 100 - The Complete Works"; Various Artists Decca 478 5364 (65 CDs + 1 DVD!)	£190.00	Mendelssohn: Symphonies 3 & 4; Orchestra of the C18th/Bruggen Glossa GCD 921117	£13.99
Britten/Shostakovich: Violin Concs; Ehnes/Bournemouth SO/Karabits ONYX 4113	£12.99	"Messiaen - The Complete Edition"; Various Artists DG 480 1333 (32 CDs!)	£94.99
Bruckner: Symphony 2; Orch de la Suisse Romande/Janowski Pentatone PTC 5186448 (SACD)	£12.99	Mozart: Symphonies 39-41; Orch de Champs-Élysées/Herreweghe Phi LPH011 (2 CDs)	£19.99
Bruckner: Symphony 6; Orchestra Metropolitan/Nezet-Seguin Atma ACD 22639	£12.99	Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto 1/Sym 1; Sudbin/Singapore SO/Shui BIS 2012 (SACD)	£12.99
"Carpentersville" (American Songs); Lucy Schauer ABC 481 0331	£12.99	Schumann: Symphony 2/etc; Orchestra Mozart/Abbado DG 479 1061	£12.99
"Choirbook for the Queen"; BBC Singers/Cleobury Priory PRCD 1097	£13.99	Szymanowski: Symphonies 2 & 4; LSO/Gergiev LSO Live LSO 0731	£8.99
Danzl: Der Berggeist; Kamerchor & Hofkapelle Stuttgart/Bernius Carus 83296	£13.99	Wagner: Opera excerpts; Petra Lang/Budapest Festival Orchestra/Fischer Channel Classics CCSSA 32713 (SACD)	£12.99
Dubois: Piano Concertos; Tiberghien/BBC SSO/Manze Hyperion CDA 67931	£12.99	Wagner: Der Ring des Nibelungen; cond Thielemann DG 479 1560 (14 CDs + 2 DVDs)	£74.99

NEW DVDs

Brahms: Symphony 2/Janacek: Glagolitic Mass; Bavarian RSO/Jansons Arthaus 101 684	£19.99	Shakespeare: Henry V (The Globe 2012) Opus Arte OA 1112D	£19.99
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Dvorak: Symphony 9 (+ Ives/Adams/Sytravinsky); Bavarian RSO/Nelsons C Major 713 408	£19.99	(Also available on Blu-Ray, 724 904, £29.99)	
(Also available on Blu-Ray, 713 504, £29.99)		Verdi: Falstaff; Maestri/Salsi/Gandia/Battistoni (Parma 2011) C Major 725 208	£24.99
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Prokofiev: The Gambler; Galuzin/Aleksashkin/Mariinsky Orch/Gergiev Mariinsky MAR 0536	£21.99	Verdi: Otello; Antonenko/Poplavskaya/Alvarez/Muti (Salzburg 2008) C Major 725 008	£24.99
(Also available on Blu-Ray, MAR0540, £29.99)		(Also available on Blu-Ray, 725 104, £29.99)	
Rossini: Ciro in Babilonia; Podles/Pratt/Spyres/Crutchfield (Pesaro 2012) Opus Arte OA 1108D	£24.99	Wagner: Tristan & Isolde; Kollo/Jones/Kout (Tokyo 1993) Arthaus 102 317 (2 DVDs)	£29.99
(Also available on Blu-Ray, OABD 7123D, £29.99)		(Also available on Blu-Ray, 108 083, £29.99)	
Salzburg Festival 2012 Opening Concert; VPO/Gergiev Euroarts 207 2618	£24.99	Zimmermann: Die Soldaten; Muff/Aikin/Metzner (Salzburg 2012) Euroarts 207 2588	£24.99
(Also available on Blu-Ray, 207 2614, £29.99)		(Also available on Blu-Ray, 207 2584, £29.99)	

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MUSICAL JOURNEYS

Gramophone's monthly search for the best classical music experiences around the world

An ode to Socrates

Rebecca Schmid witnesses the world premiere of Brett Dean's dramatic new oratorio at the Philharmonie in Berlin



(Front, left to right) Sir John Tomlinson, Sir Simon Rattle and Brett Dean

A brushed electric guitar whirs beneath a rustling gong. Terracotta pots clink menacingly above muted cellos. The chorus hisses against the spiralling, downward scales of offstage violins. Already in the opening minutes of Brett Dean's *The Last Days of Socrates*, which had its world premiere at Berlin's Philharmonie on April 25, drama lurks beneath the surface of a mysterious sound world. The work for bass-baritone, chorus and orchestra, which explores the trial of the Athenian philosopher in 399 BC to a libretto by Australian poet Graeme William Ellis, is a co-commission from the Berlin Radio Choir (who performed with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle), the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Melbourne Symphony.

Dean, approached by the principal conductor of the Berlin Radio Choir, Simon Halsey, to write a work in which the chorus assumed a central role, arrived at the idea while his wife, a painter, was researching ancient sagas and myths. As fate would have it, he stumbled upon a collection of the Platonic dialogues – which include descriptions of Socrates's trial for impiety and death by poison – at a second-hand book sale in Melbourne. 'The idea of one person against many fascinated me,' Dean recalls. 'To set an intimate love song for chorus seems kind of counterintuitive, although it has led to some very beautiful music over time. I liked the idea of it genuinely being many voices that come together – in this instance with equally vociferous points of view.'

From the second movement, the chorus is often split, with the tenors and basses acting as Socrates's accusers and the female voices as his supporters. In the third and final movement, when the executioner hands Socrates the hemlock cup, a female ensemble sings from a balcony above the stage as if weeping from the heavens. 'The swan does not grieve for its end,' proclaims the philosopher, sung by the Wagnerian bass-baritone Sir John Tomlinson, in a metaphor evoking Socrates's belief – as bequeathed to us by Plato – that death was not to be feared and could even be a cure for the body. As the swan sings, indicating its last breath, female members of the chorus emit upward *glissandos* at once ecstatic and pained. Halsey praises Dean's choral writing

for its tremendous sonic palette but also for its practical nature. 'Right at the beginning, melodic fragments allow the singers to find their first note,' he explains.

'At first hearing, the piece doesn't sound very tonal, but then you realise the whole of the third moment is actually in F major and that the language is quite friendly.' Similarly, Dean's orchestration is at once highly complex and vivid. The composer works with layers of inventive timbres that range from oboe multiphonics (played by no less than Albrecht Mayer) approximating a fire alarm, to a waterphone (an instrument with a steel base to which water can be added to create an even more ghostly sound) against *glissando pizzicatos* that evokes an unearthly realm. A percussion stand including terracotta pots of six different sizes references a practice in ancient Greece by which two different coins were thrown into a terracotta vat to determine someone's guilt or innocence. Dean, once a viola

'An ensemble sings from a balcony above the stage as if weeping from the heavens'

player with the Berlin Philharmonic, also couldn't help but include direct nods to his 'old band'. A trio of double basses, which emerges when the poison is taking effect on Socrates, pays homage to 'three of the finest bass players you'll find anywhere,' in the composer's words.

The work was paired with Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, a monumental reflection upon the uncontrollable violence and repression of the Jewish people at the outbreak of the Second World War. Halsey, who has collaborated with Rattle and the Philharmonic to premiere works by Jonathan Harvey and Mark-Anthony Turnage, admits that the concert is the heaviest they have undertaken. A party was planned afterwards out of sheer relief, he says. 'But I'm really, really pleased. I am pretty clear that we've got a difficult but major work. I'd be very surprised if it didn't become a piece that the leading orchestras and choruses want to perform.'

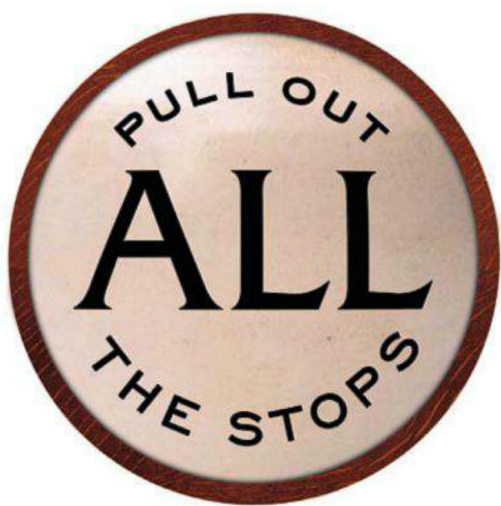
Beethoven in Bogotá

Laurence Vittes travels to Colombia to witness a new classical music festival that should be the envy of the world

Bogotá's first Festival Internacional de Música – 'Bogotá es Beethoven' – was a huge success. Comprising 56 often-overlapping all-Beethoven concerts performed by 420 musicians at 12 venues across three days in March, it established the cultural diversity of Colombia's capital and enhanced its standing as one of the world's great cities, helping to further erase memories of its violent past.

The festival was the brainchild of actor, director and playwright Ramiro Osorio, who had been Colombia's first minister of culture in 1997. When Osorio came up with the idea of starting the Ibero-

Do you have a story about the Royal Festival Hall Organ?



Southbank Centre is collecting memories about organs as part of a large scale project to celebrate the return of the Royal Festival Hall organ in March 2014. If you performed on an organ, were a member of an audience, or simply love the instrument and have a story to tell, we want to hear from you. Your memories will be collected online and will be recorded in an installation in Royal Festival Hall during March 2014.

You can learn more about the extraordinary project to restore the organ and tell us your memories by visiting pulloutallthestops.org/memories. Or why not email your stories to organmemories@southbankcentre.co.uk or leave a message on 020 7082 8058?



**SOUTHBANK
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American Theater Festival of Bogotá in 1988 to help celebrate the city's 450th birthday, friends and colleagues told him he was crazy. Today, it is billed as the 'largest theatre showcase in the world'.

When Bogotá opened its multi-purpose, 1300-seat Teatro Mayor Julio Mario Santo Domingo three years ago to house the theatre festival and a new arts library, Osorio intended that music would also be a large part of the mix. A few days before the festival began, the surprisingly calm Osorio told me that the unique public/private partnership the city had fashioned could well be a model for theatres everywhere.

The quality and stylistic range of the best performances would have stunned festival audiences in Lucerne and Verbier. After

'Performances would have stunned audiences in Lucerne and Verbier'

Andrei Korobeinikov played Beethoven's Op 111 with the intensity of a young Rachmaninov, we in the press all ran next door to hear Boris Berezovsky light fires in the First Concerto, matched by the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Colombia conducted by the hot young Venezuelan Carlos Izcaray. Stefan Vladar, imperial in the *Emperor* Concerto, and John Lill, incomparably magisterial in the *Waldstein* Sonata, were experiences that will probably never be surpassed. The Sinfonia Rotterdam conducted by Conrad van Alphen contributed a vivid *Eroica* Symphony and an unforgettably poetic, flowing *Pastoral*.

An equally big part of the story was the brave-new-world audience, the demographics of which would make North American orchestra administrators cry. Comprising young and old, families with children, teens on dates and even an array of critics from

The insider's guide

Gramophone selects July's unmissable musical events

1 Chester, MBNA Music Festival
The MBNA Chester Music Festival runs from June 1-16, with performances from new chamber group Ensemble Deva, the Manchester Camerata, pianists Jackie Jaekyung Yoo and Martin Roscoe, and guitarist Craig Ogden. chestermusicfestival.co.uk

4 Washington DC, US Capitol West Lawn
The National Symphony Orchestra performs a free Independence Day concert on the West Lawn of the US Capitol building. kennedy-center.org

5 Stellenbosch, University Konservatorium
The Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival celebrates its 10th-anniversary season. Running from July 5-14, the event showcases 250 students from across South Africa and a faculty of 27 musicians from institutions such as the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in concerts and masterclasses. sicismf.co.za

6 Munich, Odeonsplatz
Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in a special open-air concert featuring tenor Rolando Villazón, baritone Thomas Hampson and the Bavarian Radio Choir on July 6 and 7. br.de/radio/br-klassik

9 Milan, Teatro alla Scala
La Scala stages Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* from July 9-25, conducted by Daniele Rustioni and featuring Marcelo Álvarez and Piero Pretti as Riccardo, and Sondra Radvanovsky and Oksana Dyka as Amelia on alternating evenings. teatroallascala.org

12 West Dean, W Sussex, College
The 32nd Chilingirian Quartet Summer School takes place from July 12-18, offering young professional and student quartets the opportunity to work with the Chilingirians, plus public concerts. westdean.org.uk

15 North Adams, Massachusetts, MoCA
Bang on a Can's 12th annual music festival runs from July 15 to



Boris Berezovsky: outstanding in Beethoven's First Concerto

Madrid, Mexico City, Buenos Aires and Bogotá, the audiences responded so generously and immediately that many of the musicians called them the best they had ever played for.

The tickets, with a top price of \$35, were 93 per cent subsidised, which meant basically that people paid what they could afford. The spectacular results – 90 per cent of the concerts were sold out – and the connection between the performers, the audiences and the music, suggested that the best 'outreach' is to give the public access to great music and great music-making, and forget about the usual educational paraphernalia.

As soon as the dust was settling from 'Bogotá es Beethoven', Ramiro Osorio was on his way to Russia to scout musical talent. Coming up in two years, the Teatro Mayor will present 'Bogotá es Mozart' as the city's Festival Internacional de Música for 2015. **G**

August 4 – a three-week programme of performances and lectures attended by over 50 cutting-edge composers and performers from around the world. Highlights include Julia Wolfe's *Steel Hammer* and the annual Bang on a Can Marathon. bangonacan.org/summer_festival

18 Chichester, Cathedral
The Southern Cathedrals Festival takes place in Chichester from July 18-21 with particular nods to Benjamin Britten in his centenary year, and Francis Poulenc, who died 50 years ago. There are appearances from the Choir of Chichester Cathedral, choristers from Winchester and Salisbury Cathedrals, and organist Mark Wardell. southerncathedralsfestival.org.uk

20 Melbourne, Arts Centre
Violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja leads the Australian Chamber Orchestra from the front in three performances from July 20 to August 3 at the Arts Centre. The concerts are titled 'The Barefoot Fiddler' and all feature Bach's Concerto for Three Violins, BWV1064, Mozart's Adagio and Fugue, D546, Ginastera's Concerto for Strings and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. artscentremelbourne.com.au

EVENT OF THE MONTH

July 4

Manchester; International Festival

The Manchester International Festival runs from July 4-21 and includes a new staging of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* by Romeo Castellucci; Peter Sellars's *Michelangelo Sonnets* – a new staging of Shostakovich's *Suite on Verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti* featuring bass-baritone Eric Owens and organist Cameron Carpenter; Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No 1 performed by Martha Argerich and the Manchester Camerata; and three world premieres by Sir John Tavener featuring cellist Steven Isserlis with singers Elin Manahan Thomas, John Mark Ainsley and Jonathan Lemalu. mif.co.uk



Argerich joins Manchester Camerata

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III INTERNATIONAL *Uuno Klami* COMPOSITION COMPETITION

Works entered for the III International Uuno Klami Composition Competition must be 15-30 minutes long and reach the Competition Office by **2 December 2013** at the latest.

The Competition will culminate in finals concerts to be held in Kymenlaakso, Finland in autumn 2014, after which the Jury will select the prize winners. The orchestra at finals concerts will be the **Kymi Sinfonietta**.

The members of the Jury will be composer **Kalevi Aho** (Finland), composer **Magnus Lindberg** (Finland), composer **Erkki-Sven Tüür** (Estonia) and conductor **Yasuo Shinozaki** (Japan/UK).

The following prizes will be awarded: I prize 11,000 euros, II prize 9,000 euros and III prize 7,000 euros.

Participation in the competition is confined to members of a EU Member State or a closely-associated country. There is no age limit in the competition.



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www.klamicompetition.fi

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THIS MONTH, how traditional hi-fi is adapting to survive, the superb little Chorus 705 speakers from Focal, Primare's heavyweight DAC30 and why everyone's making headphones.

Andrew Everard, Audio Editor

JULY TEST DISCS



With lovely presence and focus, Simon Trpčeski's Wigmore Hall Live set is a truly demonstration-quality recording



The great space of St Paul's is a thrilling backdrop to this LSO Live recording of Berlioz's *Grande Messe des morts*

The net casts wider but core audio carries on

The audio industry is diversifying but there are still plenty of hi-fi and home cinema launches

The audio market is changing. In the past few weeks I've seen Bang & Olufsen expanding its headphone range, Onkyo and KEF moving into the personal stereo market, and Meridian and Sonus Faber announcing new, or increased, tie-ups with car manufacturers for audio systems.

However, it's encouraging to see that there is still some activity in the core audio and home cinema markets. Writing this just a couple of weeks before heading off to the annual High End Show in Munich – from which I'll be reporting in next month's magazine – I am sure there'll be no shortage of traditional hi-fi and surround products for me to see (and hear).

Valves form the heart of the new amplifier launches this month: the **McIntosh C2500** preamplifier uses them in its input stage but also has 32-bit/192kHz digital-to-analogue conversion, allowing it to take signal from conventional analogue components, digital audio sources or a computer. In fact, it has inputs for 15 sources, including a user-adjustable moving coil/moving magnet phono for a record player. With three sets of outputs to drive power amplifiers, it sells for £7495.

Also from the USA is the Sphinx integrated amplifier from **Rogue Audio**, combining a valve input stage with Class D power amplification capable of 100W per channel. It's of a very simple, direct design, with nothing more than a moving magnet phono stage, three line-ins, preouts for a subwoofer, volume and balance controls, and a headphone socket. It sells for £1499.

Designed in the UK, then assembled in China before coming home for final adjustment and tuning, are the **Icon Audio** MB30SE monobloc power amplifiers, selling for £2000 a pair. Built around the Super Sung



Tol KT120 valve, they deliver 16W in triode mode or 27W in ultralinear mode, and use point-to-point wiring throughout.

New from **Quad** is the latest version of its 'subwoofer and satellites' surround system, the L-lite Plus. Drawing on the company's full-size L-Classic range, the new design is available in a 5.1-channel package at £1200 or as individual component speakers starting from £250/pr for the satellite speakers. New long-throw mid/bass units and a soft-dome tweeter are used, and the cabinets are available in high-gloss black, white or 'ruby red'.

Also compact are the new components from **TEAC** in its Reference series. The £600 NP-H750 is a network-streaming stereo amplifier with Wi-Fi and Apple AirPlay built in, along with an iPod/iPhone/iPad-compatible USB socket on the front and an asynchronous USB input for computer connection, while the £300 CD-H750 CD player also has an iPod/iPhone USB input, as well as being able to record direct from CD to USB memory.

However, the star of the show may be the little CR-H260iDAB, at £400. It has a DAB/FM/AM tuner, 2x25W amplification, a built-in CD player, onboard Bluetooth for wireless music streaming from computers, smartphones and tablets, and both an iPod/iPhone/iPad-friendly USB socket and an SD memory card slot, from which it can play music. Definitely well-equipped! **G**

1 McIntosh combines valves and digital in its C2500 preamplifier

2 Rogue Audio plays it simple with its Sphinx integrated amplifier

3 Icon Audio designs its MB30SE amps in the UK, but builds them in China

4 Quad draws on its L-Classic speakers to make the little L-lite Plus system

5 TEAC has added components with a twist to its Reference range

Focal Chorus 705

French speaker company goes back to basics for a winning sound



SPECIFICATION

FOCAL CHORUS 705

Type Two-way bookshelf/standmount speaker

Price £398/pr

Drive units 13cm Polyglass mid/bass, 25mm TNV2 tweeter

Frequency response (+/-3dB) 65Hz-28kHz

Sensitivity 89dB/W/m

Nominal impedance 8 ohms (min 3 ohms)

Recommended amplifier power 25-100W

Finishes Walnut/Rosewood (Style Black at £60 premium)

Dimensions (HxWxD) 31.5x19x22.7cm

focal.com



This is one of those reviews that almost didn't happen. Three or four issues back, I was just wrapping up a the writing of a test of the excellent Chorus 705V speakers from French speaker manufacturer Focal when the company announced it was scrapping that range and launching an all-new Chorus 700 line-up.

The idea, it explained, was to move away from the rather complex and 'designery' 700V models – the 'V' suffix indicated the use of glass fibre in the speaker cones (V for 'verre') and was echoed in the styling, and even the speaker grilles stood out from the cabinet to form a 'V' shape. What was needed, Focal MD Gérard Chrétien explained, was 'a design for the post-crisis market'. Sounds dramatic, but what Chrétien was alluding to was that styling on the old 700V series: he explains that the design was 'ideal for the time when customers were looking for statement products', but now 'there has been a shift to more classic design – design with longevity in mind'.

For a company making some of the most dramatic-looking speakers currently on sale – for example the Utopia series, with its separate enclosures looking like the speaker has been slashed through and then curved into shape – that's a radical change. To

date, Focal speakers have always looked very distinctive, yet here we have a range of speakers, from the entry-level model right through to large floorstanding versions, with an almost conventional appearance. The Chorus 705 we have here, being the simplest design in the range, makes that point well: it's a very simple 'two drivers in a box' design. Anyway, having spiked that original review – which was very complimentary, by the way, should you happen to find a retailer with a pair of the old 705Vs in stock at a knockdown price – all I could do was wait for the new models to arrive, hoping they'd be as good as those they replace.

Announced at the CES 2013 show in January, the new speakers are now in the shops, so it seemed most logical to start where I'd left off, so to speak; and so, after a few final tweaks to the design before production started, a pair of factory-fresh Chorus 705 speakers were delivered a month or so back. And very elegant they are too: for all of Chrétien's suggestions of harsh economic realities, these are no poverty-specification speakers, as one might hope given the price, which is just under £400 a pair in the standard walnut or rosewood finish.

As already mentioned, the Chorus 705s are the entry-point for a seven-strong range

extending all the way up to the £1198/pr Chorus 726 floorstanding speakers, a three-way design with twin bass drivers, and taking in a centre-channel and surround speakers for home cinema use along the way. All the speakers come in those standard finishes, with 'Style Black' (combining high gloss and leather-textured surfaces) available at a premium: it's £60 extra on the Chorus 705s,

'Despite all MD Gérard Chrétien's suggestions of harsh economic realities, these are no poverty-specification speakers'

for example. And all the speakers are made by Focal in its French factories, as are the drive units, at a time when so many other famous names have outsourced production in the quest for cost-savings.

That should really come as no surprise. Focal has built up its not inconsiderable business by investing heavily in research, development and manufacturing, not only making its speakers but also producing most of the components for them in-house. As well as its hi-fi speaker range, from the Chorus 705 right up to the massive

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The open, fast and weighty sound of the Focal speakers makes them well-suited for use with top-notch systems...

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For use in small rooms, the little Marantz streaming/CD system will match well with the Focals to deliver an attractive sound, whether from CD, radio or network-stored music



NAIM UNITILITE

With much of the ability of the pricier Uniti systems but at a highly attractive price level, the UnitiLite is fully able to make the most of the Focals



Grande Utopia EM, it makes desktop audio systems, headphones, in-car speakers and amplifiers and pro-use monitoring systems; and alongside conventional drive units it has in-house technologies including Beryllium tweeters and driver cones made from sandwiches of Polyglass and foam. Those last are the company's 'W-cone' drivers – two layers of glass means double-V, and of course 'double-V' in French is 'W'.

While the little 705s may be normal-looking, they too have very Focal innovation built-in: the 13cm mid/bass unit is one of the company's Polyglass drivers, in which the cellulose surface is covered with minute hollow glass spheres, while the 25mm tweeter is an all-new aluminium/magnesium inverted dome design Focal calls TNV2. It's mounted in a suspension system using Poron microcellular urethane, used to ensure linearity and a flatter frequency response up to 30kHz without break-up, and assembled using the surface tension of the adhesive employed, to minimise the amount required and thus the weight. As Focal puts it, 'the masses in high frequency units are so low that every extra microgram of adhesive is critical to performance'. That's typical of the kind of attention to detail Focal brings to its products – and the kind of flexibility in-house production allows.

The voice coil is also kept small to the same end. The tweeter is fitted to the metal structure wrapped over the top of the cabinet and carrying the Focal logo, so even what looks like a design element actually serves a real purpose.

The cabinet is built from 18mm and 24mm MDF with structural bracing, with non-parallel internal walls to break up resonances. The crossover is an in-house OPC design (its simplicity aided by the in-house driver manufacture), the front venting port is an aerodynamic design for less distortion, and even the grille cloth has been redesigned for better integration.

PERFORMANCE

As I mentioned before, I was rather taken with the old Chorus 705V speakers, and the new arrival proved no disappointment. Thanks to that front port, the 705 is designed to be flexible about positioning – Focal even supplies wall mounts and suggests the speakers could be used for the rear channels

in a larger Chorus 700 surround system – and while the manual cautions against using the speakers too close to room boundaries, I found they could be used hard against a wall with very little deleterious effect, save some slight bloom in the bass.

That aside, the old equilateral triangle set-up works well, with the speakers on some rigid, heavy stands – I'm still using a pair of ancient sand-filled Atacamas – and slightly toed-in towards the listening position. Neither is there any faffing around with 'to biwire or not to biwire': the speakers have just a single set of terminals.

All of that done, and with the speakers on the end of a range of systems from my usual Naim Supernait to the Naim DAC-V1/NAP 100 reviewed last month and an all-Marantz set-up using a CD-63 MkII KI-Signature and MusicLink preamp and monoblocs, it was time to enjoy the fast, well-extended and highly informative sound of the Chorus 705s. Any worries I had about how they would shape up against the old 705V speakers were swiftly dispelled: the new model may be even more open and revealing than the model it replaces but it accomplishes this without ever becoming 'edgy' or over-bright, thanks in no small part to its well-developed yet tightly controlled low-end. Focal suggests these speakers are suitable for rooms up to 15m², and are 'the basis of a formidable system with a subwoofer', but even in my room, which is just beyond the upper end of that suggested usage, I felt no need for some low-end assistance, other than when playing the usual suspects such as organ music or those 1812 cannon.

Even then the 705s delivered a sound with exceptional weight and impact for boxes so small – they stand just 31.5cm tall – and, while there was a bit of 'lost in translation' about the Focal website's original description of them as 'Compact but nervous' (it's since been changed!), I heard no signs of trepidation. Instead the 705s always sound assured, confident and, given a suitably accomplished amplifier, entirely in control of the music.

There's no shortage of similarly sized 'bookshelf' speakers on the market, many of them selling for less than the Focals; however, on this showing, the Chorus 705s are worth every penny of their price and bode well for the rest of the company's entry-level range. **G**

DESIGN NOTES

Gérard Chrétien

MD, Focal-JMLab

From Motown to Bartók, and why guitars mustn't sound like fruit boxes



Having started his career with French hi-fi magazine *L'Audiophile*, Gérard Chrétien has been with Focal-JMLab for almost 23 years, and now divides his time between setting the course of the company's product ranges and running its marketing operations. And Focal is clearly a company on the move, showing impressive increases in sales even in what is widely acknowledged as a pretty tough market right now, as well as diversified to the extent that its range extends from little 'lifestyle' speakers designed to sit on the desk either side of a computer all the way through to its striking Utopia flagship speaker line-up.

Chrétien's early exposure to music was the sounds of Tamla Motown but he soon discovered 'the sensuality of sound' of classical music, counting among his earliest favourites Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, conducted by Solti. These days, he says, 'Saint-Saëns, Fauré, Ravel and Satie match my feelings, but it would take many lives to immerse myself in all the music I would like to'. However, he admits that the constant reinvention of jazz makes it his favourite genre.

For tuning, 'I like to have some acoustic reference, so I will start with piano – usually jazz – but for sound stage and dynamics, nothing matches classical music,' he says, citing Saint-Saëns's *Organ Symphony* (the Orchestra of the Opéra-Bastille, Paris/Myung-Whun Chung recording – DG, 8/93) as an oft-used favourite.

He says that the key point of Focal's design and development of speakers is that 'We design and build a drive unit for each loudspeaker, not for ranges.

'We believe in "garbage in garbage out" and design our drive units to require only simple crossovers – these keep optimum phase response and sound better. We want an acoustic guitar to sound like an acoustic guitar, not somebody strumming on a few strings stretched across a fruit box.'

'We design a drive unit for a speaker, not for a complete range of speakers'

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Asynchronous USB is the new 'must have' in the digital audio market. Used when a computer is connected to a DAC, it allows that DAC to control the flow of data from the computer. The idea is to reduce jitter – digital timing errors between source and DAC. It's a major cause of digital set-ups sounding – well, a bit 'digital' (in the artificial and mechanical sense).

So asynchronous USB is one of the features of the Primare DAC30, a big, solid slab of a converter from the Swedish company. Selling for £1999, it combines Primare's usual simplicity of outward design with high-quality internal engineering, from power supplies all the way through to circuit layout.

The hefty chassis and trio of feet provide the rigidity and damping to let what's within do its job to the best of its abilities, and what's within is the high-quality Crystal DSD DAC CS439 multibit Delta-Sigma

converter, capable of handling signals at up to 24-bit/192kHz and fed by an SRC 4392 asynchronous sample-rate converter. This has further jitter-suppression software to ensure that the signal delivered to the DAC is as clean as possible. Downstream of the DAC is Primare's own analogue circuitry, using Burr-Brown op-amps, selected components and an output stage with a single MOSFET driven by an active current source.

The 24-bit/192kHz USB interface is from XMOS, with Primare working with its developers to optimise the firmware for this application, and the DAC30 also has a single AES/EBU electrical digital input on an XLR socket, three electrical digital inputs and three TOSLink optical, and outputs on both phono sockets and balanced XLRs. Indicator lights on the front panel show the input connected, digital lock and the sampling rate being received, and the remote handset allows

power on/off, direct digital inputs selection or scrolling through the inputs, and will also turn off the front-panel indicators.

PERFORMANCE

The Primare displayed one of the more obvious running-in progressions I have heard for a long while – from cold it's impressive, if rather analytical and mechanical, but after a day or two's use it clearly becomes richer, warmer and more 'together'-sounding.

This is a DAC capable of excellent insight into the minutiae of a recording, making clear the size and acoustics of the venue, and also a sense of the 'sound' of a studio or location in the moments before the performance begins. However, it also retains its composure when things get busy, enabling the threads making up a complex work to be studied, or just the effect of the whole to be enjoyed.

There's effortless power here, making the dynamics of a piece truly thrilling, while at the same time the Primare always sounds entirely within its capabilities. It delivers a big-boned, beautifully detailed sound with well-recorded CDs, and really comes into its own with higher-resolution 'Studio Master' recordings.

At a shade under £2000, the Primare is up against tough competition in the digital music field, but its ability to give the illusion of a smooth, easy-going sound while delivering so much insight should win it many fans. This is a DAC designed to play music and do all the hi-fi stuff as a foundation to what's being played, not a distraction from it. **G**



HOW TO TEST...

The Primare does a fine job with vocal and instrumental textures within a warm, rich sound. Test it with this disc of Telemann arias by Dorothee Mields and L'Orfeo Baroque Orchestra to hear just what this fine DAC can do.

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Sonus faber partners with Pagani for hypercar hi-fi, while KEF (right) gets personal



In a tough market, it's a case of diversify to survive

With consumer electronics companies feeling the pinch, they're exploring any new product channel they can find

A month or two back, I took delivery of a new car. No, you haven't strayed over to the pages of *Autocar* – this is still *Gramophone*, and still High Fidelity. My point is that on taking delivery I was more than a little pleased to see badges from one of Britain's best-known audio firms, Meridian, on the loudspeakers, rather than from Alpine as on my previous version of the same model.

Of course, tie-ups between car manufacturers and audio companies are nothing new: there's Dynaudio and VW,

Bang & Olufsen with Audi and others, Bose with seemingly almost everyone and – at the top end – German company Burmester with Porsche, and Naim for Bentley. Meridian is now firmly ensconced in its tie-up with Jaguar Land Rover, with each new model having at least one audio system tailored for it, and an upgrade package available on pricier models or as an option.

I got the 'baby' Meridian system, with 12 channels, 11 speakers (the subwoofer is two-channel) and 380W output; the 'big' system uses 17 channels, 16 speakers, 825W of amplification and surround processing. Move up to the pricier vehicles and you could be listening to a 1700W, 24-channel, 29-speaker system, complete with speakers in the headlining and headrests.

Meanwhile Pagani, maker of 'hypercars' – to emphasise the point that they're no mere supercars – has got together with fellow Italians Sonus faber to build a sound system for the €1.4m Huayra, complete with 1200W of amplification, carbon fibre speaker cones and superlight components, just in case the car's 700bhp+ engine has any problem lugging all the audio around.

So what's going on? The same thing that's seen so many audio manufacturers – and notably speaker companies – diversifying into the headphone market. Just to name a few, we've had Bowers & Wilkins, Focal and PSB; Onkyo has launched a headphone line; and Bang & Olufsen has expanded its line-up with

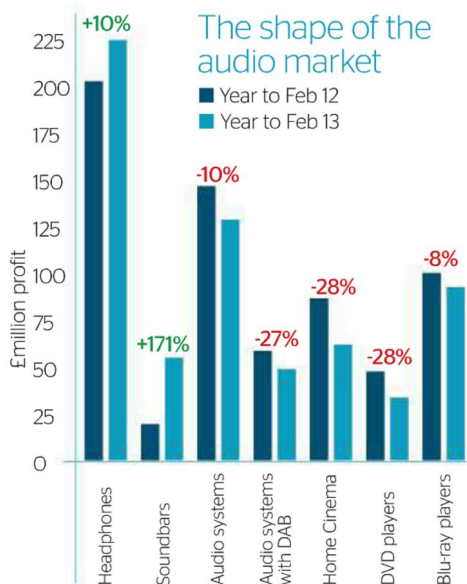
new on-ear and in-ear designs made from its usual anodised aluminium plus New Zealand leather (no barbed wire, so no blemishes!).

And the latest arrival – well, the latest as I write this, but new headphone press releases seem to arrive every day – is the first couple of headphone models from KEF, the in-ear M200 and over-ear M500, selling for £150 and £250 respectively. Like others, KEF makes great play of turning decades of speaker expertise to personal audio – but the reality is more prosaic. The conventional audio market is being hit hard not just by the ongoing global economic situation but also by a move on the part of mainly younger listeners away from the idea of a hi-fi system: music is being played from smartphones, tablets and computers, through headphones or – if the manufacturer is lucky – a wireless speaker system.

Industry analysis shows the audio systems market down 10 per cent year on year, and home cinema doing even worse. And don't even ask how sales of audio separates are faring beyond the preserve of the higher end and the diminishing numbers of specialist retailers.

Only two product areas are up: headphones and – to a spectacular degree – those soundbars you can mount under your TV and improve its sound. They play music, too, these days, and so that's another area into which hi-fi manufacturers are moving.

The story's a simple one: in a tough market, it's a case of diversify to survive, following market trends and providing the products customers want, rather than trying to 'educate' them to buy something you'd want them to have. The only problem is that if you follow fashion you're also prey to the whims of the market – and although the headphone market is holding up well by comparison with some other sectors, there's already a suggestion that sales are beginning to stall... **G**



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Chris Bradley guest conductor
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Two Folksong Arrangements	73		Non nobis, Domine	82		Concerto doppio, Op 63 WV89		(arr Woods)		'Lost Generation'	
Two Legends	73		A Song at Parting	82		Flute Sonata, Op 61 WV86		V		Daniel Figgis – 'On the Nature of	
Two Pieces	73		Songs of Sorrow, Op 10	82		Three Pieces, Op 5 WV5		Vaughan Williams		Electricity & Acoustics'	
Monteverdi			Tell me where is fancy bred	82		Etudes symphoniques, Op 13		Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis		Wilhelm Furtwängler – 'Wilhelm	
Selva morale e spirituale – Laudate			Two Songs, Op 26	82		Violin Sonata No 2, Op 121		Hymn Tune Prelude on Song 13		Furtwängler: Vienna Concerts	
Dominum (secondo); Iste Confessor						Sharafyan		(Gibbons)		1944-54'	
(secondo); Magnificat (secondo);						Ter, vor, i mej le-rinn (Lord who		The Lake in the Mountains		Vivica Genux – 'A Tribute to Faustina	
Credidi propter quod locutus sum;						makes the spring...)		Verdi		Bordoni'	
Pianto della Madonna; Beatus vir						is troubling me...)		Aida – Se quel guerrier io fossi!...		Choir of Gonville & Caius College –	
(secondo); È questa vita un lampo;						Shostakovich		Celeste Aida		'Deutsche Motette'	
Confitebor tibi Domine (secondo);						String Quartet No 3, Op 73		Un ballo in maschera – Forse		Hilliard Ensemble – 'In Search of	
Memento, Domine, David; Laudate						Symphony No 5		la soglia attinse		the Miraculous'	
pueri (secondo); Salve regina (terzo);						Symphony No 8		Dio, che nell'alma infondere		Duncan Honeybourne – 'Moeran'	
Magnificat (primo)	79					String Quartet No 1, 'From My Life'		Don Carlo – È lui...O mio Rodrigo		Roberta Invernizzi – 'I viaggi	
Mozart								I Lombardi – La mia letizia infondere		di Faustina'	
Clarinet Concerto, K622	81		Rachmaninov			Strauss		Macbeth – O figli, o figli miei!...		Carlo Ipata – 'Neapolitan Flute	
Piano Concertos – K365; K482	92		Symphonic Dances	58		Deutsche Motette, Op 62		Ah, la paterna mano		Concertos, Vol 2'	
Requiem, K626 (compl Süßmayr),			Symphony No 3	58		Don Juan		Requiem – Ingemisco		Thomas Jensen – 'Flute Concertos'	
plus movements from completions			Raskatov			Song of the Nightingale		Rigoletto – Ella mi fu rapita!...			
by Maunder, Levin, Beyer, Druce			Obikhod	83		Leylek Geldi		Parni veder le lagrime		King's Singers – 'Tributes to	
and Finnissey	81		Praise	83		Mimosa		La traviata – Lunge da lei...		Josquin Desprez'	
Requiem, K626 (ed Beyer/			Ravel			Svendsen		De' miei bollenti spiriti		Anna Leese – 'Songs of Love'	
Maunder/Alarcon)	81		Boléro	93		Norwegian Artists' Carnival, Op 14		Il trovatore – Soli or siamo...Condotta		McKenzie Sawers Duo –	
Symphony No 40	92		Daphnis et Chloé – Suite No 2	93		Symphony No 1, Op 4		ell'era in ceppi; Mal reggendeo		'The Coral Sea'	
Die Zauberflöte – Overture	93		Ma Mère l'Oye	75		Symphony No 2, Op 20		all'aspro assalto...Inoltra il piè;		James McVinnie – 'Baroque'	
Muhly			Rheinberger			La gazza ladra		Ah! sì, ben mio coll'essere		Willem Mengelberg –	
Etude 3	69		Abendlied, Op 69 No 3	83		Rapallo		Les vèpres siciliennes – C'est Guy		'Mengelberg in New York'	
Mussorgsky			Richafort			Sailing Along		de Montfort...O jour de paine		Reiner E Moritz – 'Music in the Air'	
Pictures at an Exhibition			Il n'est si douce vie	84				Villa-Lobos			
(arr for piano and saxophone)	63		Laetamini in Domino	84		Vinci		Ciranda das sete notas		Angelika Nebel –	
Mysliveček			Ne vous chaille mon coeur	84		Cantata, 'Parto ma con qual core' –		Ecco mi parto		'Bach Metamorphosis'	
Medonte	87		Requiem	84		Eccò mi parto		Catone in Utica – Confusa, smarrita;		Gustavo Núñez – 'Capricho'	
N			Salve regina	84		Non ti minaccio sdegno		Il trionfo di Camilla – Scendi da questo			
Nielsen			Sufficiebat nobis paupertas	84		Il trionfo di Camilla – Scendi da questo		soglio; Un guardo solo ancor		Eric Schulz – 'Karajan	
Flute Concerto, FS119	61		Tru Tru Trut avant	84		Sogno		O mors inevitabilis		– 'The Second Life'	
P			Rimsky-Korsakov			Vinders				Constantin Silvestri – 'Constantin	
Palella (attrib)			Sheherazade	93						Silvestri: The Complete	
Flute Concerto in G	62		Röntgen							EMI Recordings'	
Papa			Violin Sonata No 2, Op 20	71						George Vass – 'British Music	
Flute Concerto in D	62		Rossini							for Oboe and Strings'	
Perez			La gazza ladra	88							
Flute Concerto in G	62		Clarinet Quintet	69							

Samuel Adamson

The playwright on his fascination with music combined with text, and why you should start learning the piano sooner rather than later

I grew up in south Australia – my parents were farmers. It wasn't a particularly musical household, but my parents were open to everything that I wanted to do. I was 13 when I started playing the piano. There were a few years when I was progressing quickly, but I consider myself a walking example of the dangers of starting too late. After three or four years of playing, life took over: I went to university, travelled, moved countries and made a career in another field. The problem with the piano is that you can't lug it around with you!

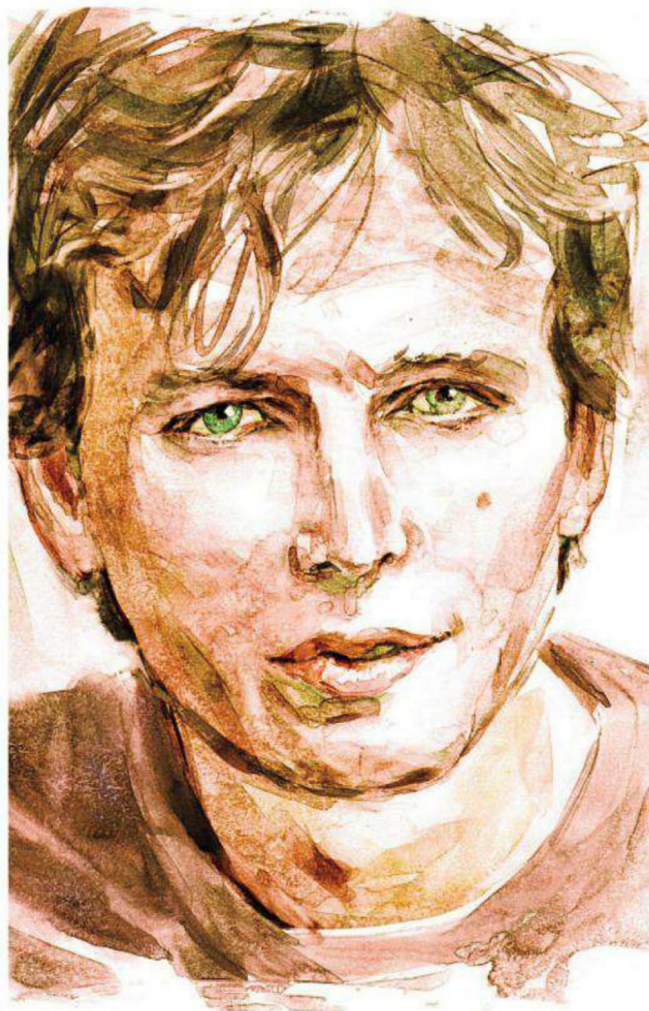
I started going to boarding school in Adelaide when I was 12. We were taken fairly regularly to see the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. I saw their performance of Britten's *War Requiem* when I was around 12 or 13. I was very taken by the idea that music could intensify something that was already pretty intense, in this case Wilfred Owen's poetry. It was fascinating, the way that the combination of music with words could bring something new to it – that something as raw, emotional and wonderful as an Owen poem could be reimagined.

I saw Peter Grimes at the Coliseum in 1991 with Philip Langridge singing the role of Grimes. The opera's sheer pain and beauty was very affective, but there's something dramatically specific about this music, too. I once worked on an adaptation of the Ibsen play *Little Eyolf*, which has parallels with *Peter Grimes*. The play's underscore used interludes from the opera, but it really didn't work. There's something so English, elegant, fearing and unsentimental about this music. You would think that removing it from its original source and applying it to another dramatic piece from a similar world would work – but it absolutely didn't.

One constant in my life has been Sondheim. He's a master of the integration of lyrics, dialogue and music to tell a story. The first Sondheim musical to make a big impression on me was *Sweeney Todd* at the National Theatre in 1993, with Alun Armstrong, Julia McKenzie and Adrian Lester. I loved the essentially through-composed score that provided a subtext to the dialogue.

I'm more likely to go to the opera than to a classical music concert. Last year I saw John Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* at English National Opera. What struck me were the effects that only music could create. For example, when Klinghoffer is killed, it's technically very complex because it's told from multiple viewpoints, in non-chronological time. The way that there are multiple perspectives of one event feels very theatrical. But at the centre of it, something extremely raw and tragic is happening.

What I listen to depends on my mood and the projects I'm working on. At the moment I'm listening to lots of Purcell. His semi-operas,



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such as *The Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur*, were an inspiration for my current project *Gabriel* with Alison Balsom. They are not only uniquely English works, but also forgotten pieces of musical theatre, since they use music, words, dance and incredible scenery to tell stories. I was also surprised by Purcell's broadness. At one end of the spectrum he wrote incredibly robust, filthy and funny songs that come straight out of the tavern; at the other are his exquisite, yearning, longing pieces of orchestral Englishness. His body of work reflects London life with all its confusions, strangeness and beauty. **G**

Samuel Adamson's new musical and theatrical event, *Gabriel*, stars trumpeter Alison Balsom and opens on July 13 at Shakespeare's Globe in London. For more information, visit shakespearesglobe.com

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